European Prize for Urban Public Space

2024

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European Prize
for Urban
Public Space

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This book presents the results of the 2024 award of the European Prize for Urban Public Space. Offered by the Centre of Contemporary Culture of Barcelona (CCCB) for the first time in 2000 to draw attention to political and cultural importance of the form of cities, the Prize has now become a permanent observatory of European metropolises and towns.

Over the past twenty-five years, the Prize has testified to the history of Europe, monitoring the pulse of its cities, and observing the improvement of emblematic places that can generate *urbanity*: squares, streets, seafronts and riverfronts, food markets, housing stock, railway stations, libraries, natural spaces, old city centres, and peripheral zones. However, in addition to typology and form, the Prize spotlights the open, relational, and civic nature of a typically urban space and, in a situation of fast-moving changes in cities, it keeps upholding and emphasising the importance of the idea of public space as a value that is essential for democracy.

With every award, the Prize offers a vivid portrait of the serious real-life problems shared by European cities, whatever their regional particularities. Yet, most of all, it brings together imaginative proposals that convey a message of confidence in the creative, transformative power of architecture, and the possibilities of urbanism for slowing the effects of climate change, building bridges where differences separate people, making cities more accessible and, as Manuel de Solà-Morales argued, imagining spaces that strengthen the awareness that we belong to a wide-ranging, diverse community.

The 2024 award once again sends out this positive message of a multiplicity of solutions which, on different scales, cities can offer from cultural contexts that are also many and diverse. Right now, they are doing this in especially convulsive circumstances, when increasingly dominant authoritarian regimes in Europe, and worldwide, are directly taking issue with a crucial political virtue of cities, which is to say their ability to provide spaces for peaceful coexistence among strangers. To add to the woes of this grave crisis of democracy, the climate crisis is constantly driving home the message that cities, and human settlements in general, are especially vulnerable spaces. But it also shows that they are places from which to imagine and put into practice other ways of inhabiting the planet. A further factor to be taken into account is that, in recent years, the digital revolution has accentuated far-reaching and accelerated changes in the urban landscape and the connection between public and private spaces in cities.

In the face of this change of era, the Prize maintains its faith in cities as both a primary front for the defence of democracy and the key cultural space of our times. It is a project that upholds the idea of the dense, compact city based on a mix of populations and uses which, without a doubt, has been one of Europe's most valuable contributions to humankind. With all its complexities and ambivalences, the Prize seeks to honour its name by defending the *public* nature of cities, the power of *urban* civility, and the political potential of Europe, which, according to Nobel laureate Olga Tokarczuk, might well have been the best political idea of the twentieth century.

The Prize is the result of a Europe-wide network the CCCB has forged over time, in an alliance with the continent's leading architecture institutions and museums, and a lengthy list of experts and jurors who, year after year, evaluate the projects and chart the way forward. Amassing outstanding public space projects, award after award, the Prize Archive has become an exceptional tool for architects, urban planners, and policy-makers, holding out creative ideas for solving problems, and working towards and confirming the idea that cities are places for imagining a brighter future.

Judit Carrera

Judit Carrera is the Director of the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (CCCB)

Park at the Warsaw Uprising Mound
Warsaw Poland

Authors

archigrest, topoScape

Developer

Zarząd Zieleni m.st. Warszawy

2023
Surface area 81,000 m^2

General Category Winner

Previous state

In Mokotów, one of Warsaw's most central districts and a rapidly growing residential area, stands the phenomenal Warsaw Uprising Mound Park. This mound was originally a dumping ground for the rubble of the city destroyed during the Second World War. The dump was used from the late 1940s to the mid-1960s, during which time it gradually became an artificial elevation reaching 35 metres above the surrounding flat, marshy terrain. In the 1970s the mound was filled with spontaneous vegetation, which developed into a ruderal "forest".

In the 1990s, on the initiative of one of the participants in the Warsaw Uprising, a memorial was erected on the top of the mound with symbols of the Polish resistance movement during the Second World War. This modest initiative, which preceded the official state narrative, turned the site into a venue for annual commemorations of the Warsaw Uprising.

However, this did not change the public perception of the mound, which was considered hard to access and unsafe. For decades it remained a degraded area, a contaminated site, a reclaimed wasteland.

Aim of the intervention

In response to the veterans of the uprising who initiated this transformation, the space was to become both a place of remembrance and a regular recreational area for the residents of the new housing developments that were being built around it. The project aimed to emphasise the historical authenticity of the site and its connection to the great collective effort of Warsaw's post-war reconstruction. It also sought to draw attention to the techniques of reusing building materials of the time, by implementing recycling technology to create rubble concrete. Another priority was to preserve the existing invasive and ruderal vegetation, which provided key ecosystem services to the city. A BioBlitz study conducted with local residents revealed the low level of biodiversity on the mound, highlighting the need to enrich the habitat by linking it to ecological corridors. A secondary objective was to encourage users to appreciate the aesthetics of the recycling present in the project and to value its authenticity.

Description

Efforts focused mainly on adapting the mound to the needs of all users. Due to the complex terrain, this required the creation of footbridges and artificial gullies. With the help of concrete specialists, technology was used to make concrete from the rubble. The slopes of the resulting gullies resemble the geological layers of an anthropogenic mound, and serve as a record of the daily manual work of the workers. The project also included recreational features, with the creation of numerous resting and walking areas, including a children's playground.

In terms of vegetation, a planting plan was developed in collaboration with a specialist in phytosociology. This was based on an analysis of the natural processes initiated by pioneering and invasive species, followed by a model for new ecosystems. As part of the education and outreach work, an outdoor exhibition on the reconstruction of Warsaw and the new type of landscape it created was set up in collaboration with a historian and a nature educator.

Different uses and locations of the rubble
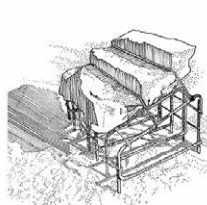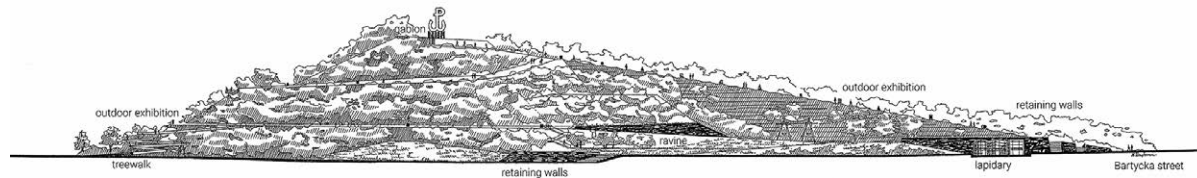
outdoor exhibition
fragment of stairs

ravine
bioreceptive rubble concrete
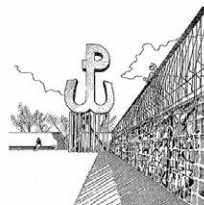
gabion wall filled with rubble
on the top of the mound

retaining walls
rubble concrete

lapidary
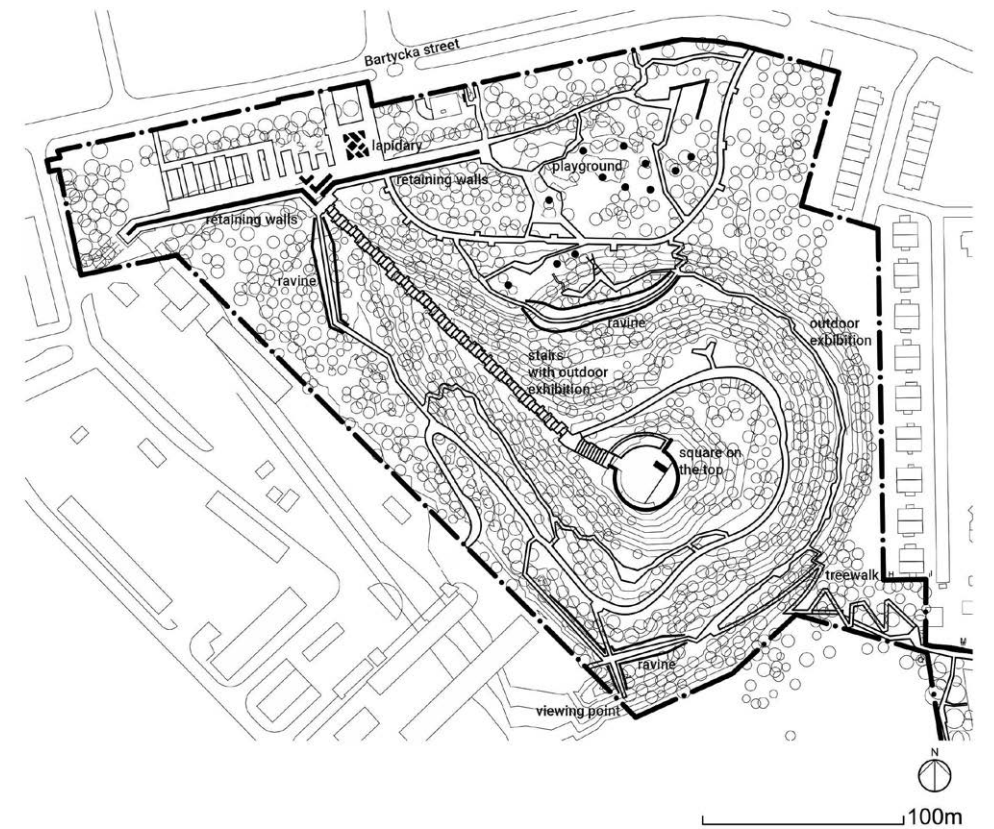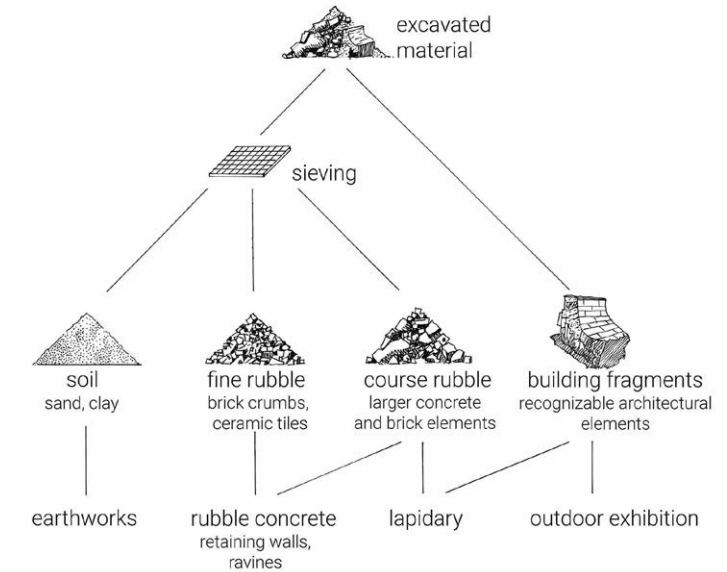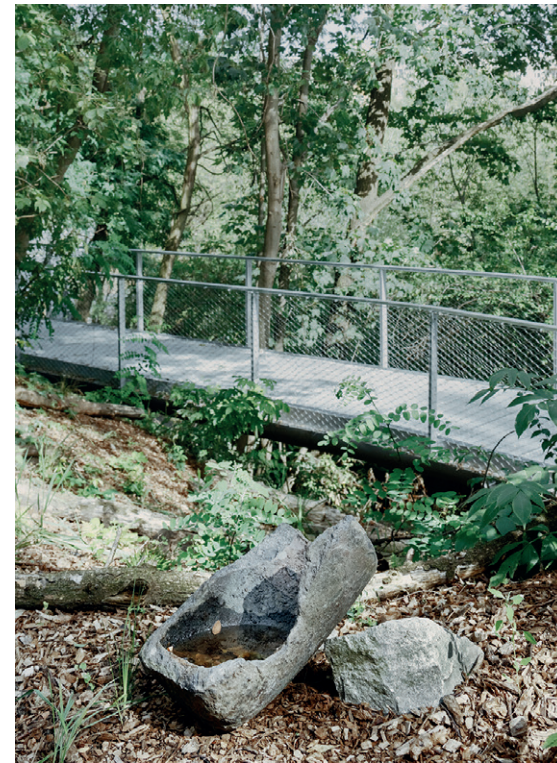
Rubble selection process and subsequent location

Assessment

This park is a clear testimony to the post-war reconstruction of Warsaw and also anticipates modern circular economy criteria. On the one hand, the project has strengthened the local population's sense of belonging to the site, as they now better understand its history and can aesthetically appreciate the use of the rubble that formed the mound. On the other hand, the project has provided the city with a new green space that is resilient to climate change, thanks to landscape management strategies and the spontaneous nature that has grown on the mound, which has also reduced maintenance costs. The result has improved access to the park, making it easier to use and more secure for visitors. For these reasons, the redevelopment has significantly improved the quality of life of the local community and strengthened its relationship with the mound, thereby strengthening the community itself.

LLUÍS ORTEGA (LO)   How does your project contribute to the idea of innovation in public space, particularly through its multiple roles as memorial, ecological machine, and educational device?

MACIEJ KAUFMAN (MK)   I found it much easier to prototype things like rubble concrete in landscape design than in commercial architecture or building construction. In public spaces, there's more flexibility, often supported by public investors. For example, using rubble concrete in a building would be risky because a constructor couldn't guarantee its performance, but in public space, there's no risk of structural failure causing serious damage. Smaller, less demanding structures in terms of load-bearing and technical properties are easier to test.

LO   So you think that public space is a good territory for experimentation?

MAGDALENA WNĘK (MW)   I think it comes down to scale. We had discussions with urbanists in Warsaw about whether the city is a place for experimentation, and they said it depends on the scale. Large-scale experiments, like altering how people live, are much riskier because changing residences is a big investment. But if you build a park and something goes wrong, people simply won't visit, which has less impact than building a poorly planned district. Many cities today face large-scale issues with public space because of past mistakes. Smaller projects allow for more experimentation and innovation.

Another factor is the investor. Public investors are typically more open to unconventional ideas, especially when there's no financial goal, like selling flats. For example, developers may resist leaving existing greenery, claiming that clients won't like it. But with public investment, it's easier to make innovations. We've also worked on many public space projects and found that people's reactions can vary. Some residents miss the old park, while others, especially newcomers, appreciate the changes.

We aimed to maintain the site's continuity and enhance its value without making drastic changes. This approach was our experiment—preserving the essence of the place while improving it. In landscape architecture, we don't clear sites entirely. Instead, we work with what's there. For us, it wasn't about creating something for profit but about public space that people can enjoy or not, without the pressure of selling something. Ultimately, scale and the client are the two key aspects here.

LO   Your park integrates leisure, memory, and nature into a single complex framework. If possible, how would you frame this as a new and desirable type of public space?

MW   I'll start by saying we should approach our project as a hybrid, as it bridges architecture and nature—something rare. Usually, architecture takes the forefront, or landscape architecture does, but this space uniquely balances commemoration, history, and nature.

Regarding nature, the main innovation was stepping back and observing rather than designing the final outcome. We chose to support the process, even if that means dealing with invasive species or evolving ecosystems. The key was to not interrupt but rather to let it unfold. We accepted that we don't know exactly how it will look in the future. The ecological perspective took precedence over aesthetics, which became secondary in comparison.

JUSTYNA DZIEDZIEJKO (JD)   Our approach involved studying small details—what kinds of plants were present, how people used the space, and how they moved through it. This approach led us to create a project that is deeply connected to the site, with the design closely reflecting these observations.

MK   Part of the site-specific approach Justyna mentioned was focusing on materiality. When we received the historical brief for the competition, it emphasized the historical impact and suggested we ignore the 80-meter-high gravel mountains. However, when we visited the site, we saw the gravel on the ground and began collecting it. This shift in focus—from commemoration to the exact materials and features on-site—became a turning point for us. We based the narrative on what was there, working with the materials we found.

This approach connects the material, architectural, and natural aspects of the project,

Maciej Kaufman (archigrest), Justyna Dziedziejko and Magdalena Wnęk (Toposcape) in conversation with **Lluís Ortega**

as we essentially worked with what was present. It's a method that could lead to entirely different projects in various contexts. For example, while we worked on a park in the suburbs of Warsaw, near a post-industrial waterfront, the rubble, vegetation, and nature would be entirely different if we were working on a park in another location. Each context shapes a unique park.

MW   It's more about the method of work than the final design. Our approach creates a system for how we cooperate with nature and materiality. The outcome of each project is entirely different, even though our thinking and discussions always follow the same key principles of our methods. The difference comes from the data—each site provides unique conditions that shape the result.

LO   **Your discussion has shifted toward the idea of research, particularly your practices and activities. I would like you to consider the methodological strategies you've already touched on—what does it mean to work in this way, and how do new tools and conceptual categories allow you to think differently, shifting from a closed system to a more open process? Additionally, with a transdisciplinary setup involving various teams, with different kinds of expertise and sensibilities, how do you establish common ground? Does the complexity of these interactions force you to design specific methods to manage such projects? Beyond the site itself, do these conditions push you to rethink and adapt how you practise within this broader context?**

MK   I'll start by saying that we began with a team of four, but to fully understand the complexity of the context, we needed many more perspectives. We brought in specialists to help, and they all shared their insights, which was incredibly eye-opening.

One of my favourite examples is the phytosociologist. His job is to study plant habitats and how plants interact as a community. When he visited the site, he explained how it had evolved over time. He described how, 20 years ago, it was dominated by metal, but now it has become the first generation of forest, which is already beginning to degrade. He showed us examples of this process and predicted that in 20 years, the space would look completely different—certain species would thrive while others would disappear. We would never have seen the space in that way.

When my partner and I visited, we saw a jungle-like landscape with mostly North American plants. The landscape architects, Magda and Justyna, saw it differently and thought the area was overrun with invasive species that needed to be controlled. But when we brought in the phytosociologist, he acted almost like a futurist, saying, "I see the future—it will become a forest like this".

Then we met with the architectural historian, who specializes in rubble concrete. When he saw the rubble pieces, he was thrilled. He immediately took photos and shared them on social media, where historians began to respond enthusiastically, appreciating the discovery.

MW   The next expert we consulted was an ecologist with a PhD in "fourth nature". When he visited, he was amazed and suggested, "So many interventions don't work—let's leave it as it is". However, we disagreed. The phytosociologist had already shown that what had grown there was now part of a forest ecosystem. We needed to enrich it with more species. The ecologist asked us to leave some spaces untouched, particularly the areas that were already established, since we wouldn't have the budget to plant everywhere. So, we decided to make some parts of the park truly untouched, to highlight that natural development.

I think landscape architecture, unlike other fields, is a discipline where you have a broad range of knowledge. You know a little about many things, but to dive deeper, you need to collaborate with specialists who have in-depth expertise. These experts aren't the ones making the designs, but they bring invaluable knowledge from fields like sociology, environmental psychology, or education. This is part of our methodology. When we begin a project, we gather our initial impressions and ideas, and then think about which experts we know who can provide more insights—whether it's a concrete technologist, psychologist, or another specialist. We recognize that we don't have all the answers, and that willingness to learn from others is key.

I also wanted to return to our approach, which Justyna mentioned earlier. It involves pattern language—searching for "affordances," or elements that naturally invite specific uses or relationships.

JD   An affordance, from an ecological perspective, refers to the potential uses that a landscape offers. For example, a piece of wood in a park may serve as an affordance for sitting, as it naturally invites people to interact with the environment in a specific way. It's about recognizing how the landscape's features allow people to engage with it intuitively.

LO   **How would you discuss the whole process, which is quite complex, as the construction of a new aesthetics? You mentioned the problem of aesthetics several times in your presentation, including both the expected aesthetics of a park and the new aesthetics emerging from this process.**

MW   I think the key issue is allowing people to feel that not everything needs to be controlled. It's about finding a balance between safety and control. Our genetic instincts are shaped by environments like the African savannah, where visibility was crucial for spotting predators. In urban ecosystems, however, the lack of clear visibility can feel threatening. Unlike familiar landscapes like forests, which have a defined canopy and clear structure, these newer ecosystems often feel dense and chaotic, making people hesitant to enter. We also looked at research on how people perceive "fourth nature" —the aesthetics of wastelands and brownfields. Our goal was to create a space that gives people a sense of safety and control over their immediate surroundings, while also allowing the rest to feel more natural and untamed. It's about providing enough structure to make people comfortable, but leaving room for the uncontrolled, growing ecosystem around them.

LO   **How do you balance letting certain interventions emerge organically with understanding the deeper memory of the place—its symbolic, historical, and ecological processes? Your work interferes, yet something new emerges beyond that. How do you navigate the dual ideas of time: the political time of commissions tied to city policy versus the long lifespan of the project itself? How do you manage these timelines, deciding when a project is finished, ready to be used, or evaluated as a successful public space?**

MK   The project had its own timeline—two years of design, two years of construction, and then the opening. It was fascinating to see people's immediate reaction as the park opened, with many eagerly waiting to experience the space for the first time. However, we recognize that this is a process, and the meaning of the place will evolve over time.

The mountain of rubble, a lasting element of the landscape, will remain for many years. While the memory of the uprising and the war may fade as generations pass, it's clear that this site will eventually carry new meanings. One possibility is that future generations will still recognize the war in the landscape, but less personally, as something distant from their own lived experience. It will evolve into an artifact of both historical struggle and ecological change.

There's also the element of ecology and waste management, as the mountain represents a kind of ecosystem growing on former landfill. In many ways, it feels like a post-human landscape —nature reclaiming something damaged by human intervention. This process underscores the resilience and persistence of nature, hinting at how landscape, abandoned by humans after ecological catastrophes, can be repurposed and regenerated. The next generations might understand this in new ways, seeing it not just as

a historical monument, but as a reminder of climate change, ecological resilience, and the natural world's ability to regenerate.

There is a long history of such artificial formations, like burial mounds from ancient cultures, that have persisted across Europe. Over time, as cultures changed and new people arrived, these formations acquired new meanings, even though the original creators and the reasons for their construction had been forgotten. I believe the same will happen here: as time passes, people will attribute new interpretations to this mountain, reflecting how we, as humans, tend to impute meaning to enduring and mysterious landscapes.

MW   For us, it was crucial that our park is located near the former exhibition space for building materials, with the surrounding area still dominated by large stores selling new construction supplies — everything from bathtubs to bricks and tiles for building new homes. The story we wanted to tell in the park contrasts with this ongoing focus on new construction. Instead, our park reflects a narrative about endings and cycles. It speaks to issues like climate change and the circular economy, about rethinking our relationship with materials and nature.

There's a clear contrast between the story told in the park and the rapid growth of new homes being built nearby. On the north and south sides of the site, the area is lined with massive complexes of construction material stores and warehouses. We didn't want to directly highlight this opposition in the space, but rather, allowed the contrast to subtly emerge as visitors experience the site.

As the conversation about the future of architecture continues to evolve, particularly in regard to reusing buildings and closing the construction material cycle, we felt this contrast could become even more relevant. Given the growing concerns over resources, such as the depletion of sand for cement, the need to address sustainability in construction is only going to grow stronger. Our park, in a small way, invites reflection on this future and the materiality that shapes it.

MK   I'd like to come back to the topic of time and sustainability, which we somewhat drifted from earlier. I believe sustainability is fundamentally about *letting go.*

We don't need ecological concrete; we need less concrete, in general. We don't need more electric cars; we need fewer cars. The aesthetic of our park reflects this philosophy of release. The design encourages accepting what we might typically call "messy" or "imperfect" aesthetics. Our narrative became a powerful tool to communicate this—it's reflected in both the architecture and landscape, but it's also clearly presented to visitors, almost like an outdoor exhibit explaining why we've let certain things remain.

For example, there's a display near a fallen tree explaining the ecological value of leaving the wood in place. It helps nourish species by providing nutrients, and we've kept the rubble because it tells a story of the place's history. This narrative, embedded in both design and signage, helps people understand why we "give up"—why we resist the urge to clean, modify, or overly control the space. It's about making space for nature and embracing imperfections as a sustainable choice.

MW   The key question is, how long will this park last without human intervention? Our approach was based on the idea that nature here doesn't need human help to thrive. Our role focused more on managing the feeling of safety and comfort for people rather than direct intervention. While we aimed to support biodiversity—since it was low and lacked ecological corridors—we believe that if humans were removed from the equation, nature would eventually evolve and the species would reestablish themselves.

For now, our goal is to foster biodiversity while maintaining accessibility. This isn't a manicured garden; we only maintain areas where people interact with the park, mowing or trimming paths and removing trees that pose risks. Trees that fall in inaccessible areas should remain as they are, with new growth emerging over time. The crux

of the project is about balancing control with letting go—embracing a more natural, untamed aesthetic while making the park comfortable and accessible.

We weren't sure if we achieved the right balance, especially since it's a unique approach compared to other parks in Warsaw. That's why we included educational components and exhibitions, which we felt were essential to help people understand this different vision.

LO   **I'd like to shift the conversation to questions of scale. How do you understand your park within the larger urban and political systems of Warsaw and as part of a European context? You've mentioned the park as almost prototypical, alongside other projects in the city. How do you see this as part of a larger ecosystem, balancing local impacts—such as on the city's population and its symbolic memory—against broader considerations, like tourists or future generations? Additionally, how do you position this intervention in the broader European context, given the complexities of the current moment? I'd like to hear your thoughts as strategic thinkers and experts on public space.**

MK   I can start with my experience in Ukraine and Eastern Europe. We visited twice, in July and just last week, and what stood out for us was the way war commemoration in public spaces is handled, especially in Ukraine. There's a strong desire to get it right.

In Łódź, a city in the Bowen region, located 80 km from the Polish border and 400 km west of Kyiv, we spoke to a journalist. She showed us the typical figurative statues of soldiers placed in public spaces and expressed concern that this kind of aesthetics might dominate war commemoration, especially with the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. She asked us for advice on how to handle it.

Our response was that we couldn't give a definitive answer but could speak from our own, very local, Polish context. We don't think it's possible to completely avoid this kind of figurative

art because there will always be a group of people who view it as the only acceptable form. Our suggestion was to design a public space that attracts people around these statues. When done well, this kind of public space could bring life to the sculpture, diminishing its strict aesthetic dominance and allowing it to blend more naturally into its surroundings.

MW   Any monument, when integrated into everyday social life, becomes part of it. It reminds people that the freedom they experience today is connected to the history represented by that monument. It's not just about commemorating on anniversaries with officials but about creating a space where people enjoy their daily lives, while simultaneously connecting with the history of their nation, region, and heroes—even those they never met.

I felt this connection myself many years ago, when I first visited this site. Standing at the top of the hill, I felt a link to both the past and future, to today's Warsaw and to a past Warsaw I never had the chance to know. It's a place that carries the stories of how our families survived catastrophic times, and those stories are intertwined with the fact that we're here today. It's about weaving that connection into everyday life, not just for history enthusiasts, but for everyone—even if you're just taking your children to buy ice cream.

MK   The DNA of the Kopia project in Warsaw lies in its bottom-up approach, driven by the person who initiated the monument. This monument had been in place for 20 years, and his vision was to create a space that blended the seriousness of war commemoration with unexpected recreation, like parachuting on the hill. While this mixture might have been hard for many to accept, it reflects the unique balance the project sought to achieve—melding history and contemporary use in a way that challenged traditional notions of monumentality.

MW   We believed that if those who fought for their country and city were doing so for a better life, it shouldn't be just about commemorating death, but also about embracing life. They fought not simply to win, but to reclaim their lives and restore the vitality they had lost. Their struggle was for the future—so that future generations could

thrive, play, and live freely. Today, in a free country, we are able to realize this vision, ensuring that their mission lives on in the public space they fought to protect. This, we believe, is how we honour them—not just through commemoration, but by fostering a space that embodies vitality and a renewed sense of life.

MK   The only way to make a public space truly lively is to make it green. If it's not green, it won't feel alive. The essence of a vibrant public space comes from its connection to nature, and that's why it needs to be heightened with green elements. It's the key to creating an environment that encourages engagement and vitality.

MW   The other side of this project is nature, which, in a sense, becomes a prototype for a modern park. The city of Warsaw conducted research into the brownfields—these waste-lands—and found that the spontaneous "fourth nature" vegetation, while not as aesthetically managed as traditional parks, provides far greater environmental benefits. It is denser, more layered, and more efficient, offering superior environmental services compared to typical green spaces like lawns and planted trees. This research made us rethink our approach: greenery isn't just about planting more trees or grass—it's part of a larger ecological system that contributes more than we often realize.

At the start of this project, we didn't set out to invent a new model or prototype. Instead, we worked with what was already there. We found that the existing environment worked well and had intrinsic value. This was evident when we consulted with experts, such as the phytosociol-ogist, who helped us to understand the ecological services these wastelands provide. Our efforts were informed by both ecological and social research, including BioBlitz studies, which guided our decisions.

What became clear was that cities don't need to invest excessively in creating pristine, high-maintenance parks. The value lies in accepting and maintaining spaces that are already functioning

well in environmental terms. While these places may not be "forests" or "meadows," they provide key services. Despite being more "anthropogenic" in nature, with some invasive plants, they're far better for the city than meticulously maintained flowerbeds or sculpted trees on a paved square.

Ultimately, our project serves as a method-ology or approach to utilizing abandoned, over-looked spaces within cities—transforming them into valuable parts of the urban ecosystem. It's about changing the aesthetic and social perception of these spaces. Instead of trying to control every aspect, we embrace the untamed, with the understanding that these places, while not perfect by conventional standards, offer long-term environmental and financial benefits. Though the upfront cost of rethinking these spaces can be higher, in future the maintenance cost is drastically reduced. The approach is simple: do as little as possible and let nature do the rest.

MK   To understand the political and contextual environment, I think it's important to recognize that we didn't work in vain. First and foremost, there was a level of understanding and openness from the municipality. We didn't have to convince them excessively to support this experiment as they were already inclined to accept it. The people we worked with were knowledgeable, well-read, and in contact with like-minded individuals. They were ready for the approach we suggested; they simply needed someone to design and implement it. There was no significant pushback or scepticism from their side.

In addition, we had a positive relationship with the general contractor. This cooperation was crucial, as, in many cases, construction projects can end on less amicable terms, often with disputes between stakeholders. However, this time, the collaboration was harmonious, and we parted on good terms, which is a rare but valuable outcome.

What was significant in this process was that there was a whole ecosystem of people —government officials, contractors, and other

stakeholders—who were genuinely interested in making this project work. We didn't have to fight against anyone or push against resistance, which made the entire process much smoother and more efficient. It was a collective effort with aligned goals, and that made all the difference.

LO   **Why do you think this project succeeded where others didn't? Was it due to a readiness and alignment across different fields, or was it the result of strategic design thinking that helped everyone recognize their role within the proposal you were building?**

MW   The cultural context of the proposal and the memory of Warsaw's past played a significant role in making the project more relatable and easier to communicate, especially in Poland and Warsaw. It provided a shared understanding and connection for people, regardless of their differing viewpoints. It acted as a unifying element. Of course, it carried the risk of offending those with different perspectives, so humility and openness to listening to all stakeholders were essential.

Our investor also conducted extensive research on the wastelands of Warsaw. This gave us a solid foundation for our approach, especially when we wanted to incorporate the concept of "fourth nature" into the exhibition. They were already familiar with the subject and knew who to bring in to contribute their expertise. It felt like we were collaborating with people who were already deeply engaged in the project and genuinely interested in innovating and pursuing new methodologies.

There were occasional challenges, like when some officials didn't immediately under-stand the design's direction. For example, when we showed plans, one individual questioned the presence of ravines and raised concerns about the landscape's flatness. But after we took him to the site, he understood the concept better, and all objections were resolved. In the end, the project was not just a vision for us, but something that every stakeholder—our investors, municipal officials, and others—contributed to. Visiting the site in person helped everyone connect with and support the idea. That hands-on engagement

with the space was key to aligning everyone's perspective and ensuring a successful collabo-ration. It was a truly cooperative and rewarding experience.

MK   I would add that Warsaw, as the largest city in Poland, aims to set innovative standards that go beyond the region. A small group of people in the city is dedicated to creating groundbreaking projects that inspire smaller cities, with the mentality that if Warsaw can do it, so can they. However, not everyone in the municipality shares this vision; there are still many more conservative voices who prefer to maintain the status quo.

MW   I believe our project isn't just innovative for the city as a whole; it also introduces new pathways through the woods, connecting previ-ously neglected areas, like the riverbank in Warsaw, which had been abandoned for many years and has since been transformed. This is another form of innovation—working with the same team to explore new ways of managing public spaces and creating accessible, functional areas within the city.

MK   What's interesting in Europe right now is how citizen-oriented societies are increasingly focusing on urban topics, particularly public space. This marks a generational shift—older generations may not prioritize it, but people under 30 are deeply invested in it. This trend will likely yield significant results in the near future, and it's fascinating to observe how society is crystallizing around the concept of public space.

Seven interventions in Monte
Castel San Pietro Switzerland

Exhibition Palace.
Charleroi Belgium

Boca de la Mina Promenade.
Reus Spain

Urban Forest
Tbilisi Georgia

General Category
Finalists

The challenges posed by an ageing society is particularly acute in the peripheral regions of Switzerland and Europe. Coupled with a decline in population as locals migrate to urban centres, these remote areas face obstacles that may redefine their future role in the country as a whole.

The local government in Monte, a village with 102 inhabitants in the municipality of Castel San Pietro (Muggio Valley), decided to follow the recommendations of a study conducted across several peripheral regions of Ticino. The study investigated the everyday needs and challenges faced by the elderly population, and, as a result, offered a series of recommendations to implement social, digital and architectural projects aimed at improving this community's quality of life.

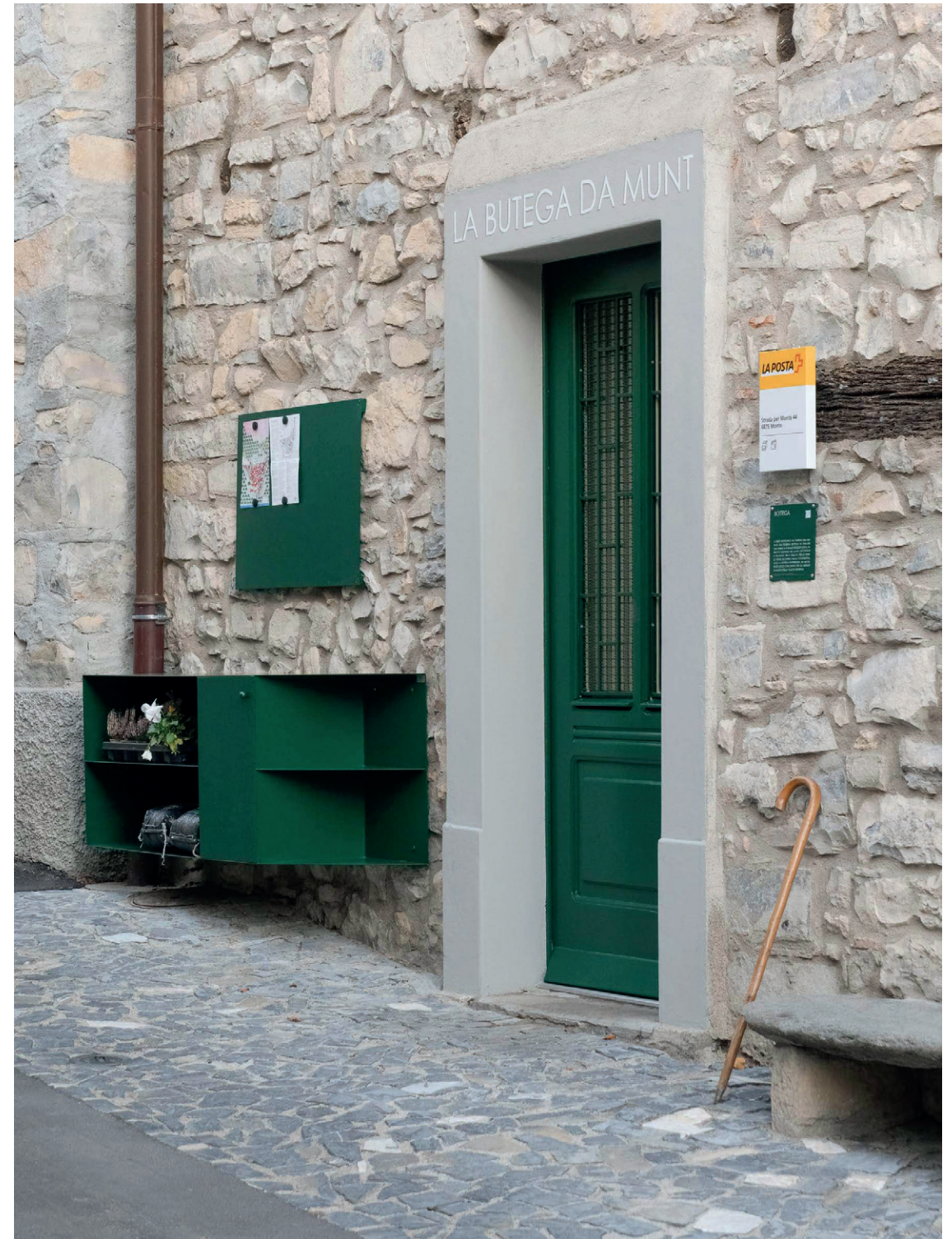# Seven interventions in Monte
Castel San Pietro
Switzerland
Finalist

Author
StudioSer

Developer
Castel San Pietro City Council

2022
Surface area 18,700 m²

Aim of the intervention

The project aimed to strengthen the village's social fabric and provide infrastructure that supports the elderly population. To enhance the residents' quality of life, the project focused primarily on offering a more inclusive redesign of the village's public spaces. With no established guidelines in place, thorough research was conducted on the village's environmental, social, and historical context. Numerous interviews were conducted with residents, key stakeholders and local experts, gathering valuable insights into how these public spaces are used today, and how they have been used in the past.

Based on this research, seven areas of interest were identified, each presenting the potential for minimal yet impactful architectural interventions, designed to reinforce the spaces' historical significance, improve accessibility and encourage social interaction.

Description

The redevelopment was brought to life along a pathway that links various functions catering the needs of the local older population, other residents and tourists, integrating the urban, landscape, economic, and social aspects of Monte's public spaces. Each modification along the pathway is drawn from the historical, social or physical potential identified during the research phase, and ensures minimal architectural disruption.

In the church square, a bench demolished in the 1990s was redesigned alongside a fountain and a new water feature. Part of the paving in the main square was replaced, giving it a new lease of life. The village shop's interior was reorganised to provide a space for social gatherings, and a small outdoor patio was introduced to allow shoppers to collect bread when the shop is closed. The fountain, which was previously the only access point to water, was fully restored and modified with a small wall that separates it from

Plan of the intervention

the adjacent car park. The cemetery's importance as a public space also inspired the redevelopment of the entrance, which was made more accessible to older individuals, and the addition of a fountain for watering flowers placed on the graves. The old wash house was transformed into a space for recreation and leisure, while the former municipal house' terrace now hosts communal dinners. New railings now guide visitors through the village, creating the opportunity to add interactive elements and transforming Monte into an area for play and social connection.

Assessment

Monte has become a model for investigating innovative solutions that promote a positive relationship between the well-being of older residents and their environment. Each aspect of the redevelopment is grounded in the memories, needs, ambitions and hopes of a community actively involved in the planning of this transformative project. The interactions between the design team and the inhabitants fostered inclusivity, acceptance and a strong sense of ownership over measures that integrate seamlessly into the village's daily goings on. Thanks to careful observation of the site's physical and social dimensions, the project has respected Monte's beauty and harmony through minimal yet impactful changes.

The project demonstrates that small but significant changes to public spaces can imbue them with a new meaning and enhance community life.

In Charleroi, an industrial city in southern Belgium, there stands a large exhibition hall, known locally as Chapex, a complex built in the 1950s in the wake of rapid post-war growth. However, within a few decades, Charleroi fell into decline due to rapid deindustrialisation, and this colossal 60,000 m² building lay virtually abandoned. Today, the renovation and revitalisation of the former exhibition hall is part of a profound transformation breathing new life into the city, made possible by a significant injection of European investment worth €500 million, impacting several areas of Charleroi. The project addresses the potential of this enormous space, which separates two parts of the city. It is located on a slope between the city centre and the post-industrial landscape, surrounded by vast parking areas.

Exhibition Palace
Charleroi Belgium
Finalist

Authors
architecten jan de vylder inge vinck, AgwA

Developers
Charleroi City Council, Igretec

2024
Surface area 60,000 m²

Aim of the intervention

The proposal encompassed a dual objective to address two main challenges. The first was urban and sought to reverse the disconnection of the upper and lower parts of the city, severed by this 500,000 m³ building. The second was economic and aimed to transform scarcity into a source of inspiration for change. The allocated budget was just one third of that typically anticipated for this type of redevelopment; the idea of 33.3% not only represented a numerical figure, but also a mindset.

The proposal combined the two approaches, elevating the façades of the foyer to reveal a stepped park with three levels, thereby reestablishing a connection between the complex and the upper and lower parts of the city. What's more, a significant portion of the budget was spent on smaller strategic aspects of the project and unplanned one-off interventions: refurbishment, repairs and maintenance.

Description

The project successfully preserved the extraordinary qualities of the original building, including its scale, rationality, and monumentality, while inviting the public space and landscape to interact with the building's structures, thus reconnecting the

city centre with its surroundings. Central to the project was the conversion of the lobby into a stepped urban park, reviving the bond between the city and its post-industrial landscape. During the construction phase, a proposal was made to integrate a congress centre, which led to the introduction of a new balcony, connecting the foyer and three classrooms on the first floor with the terraces in between. The lower floor, on street level, was converted into a festival space for 5,000 people, with extra exhibition spaces above and to the sides. These interventions have allowed the central open space to extend into the city, making it possible for different events to take place simultaneously. Some 60 different types of seeds have also been planted in the grounds surrounding the building, inviting nature in to reclaim the space.

The unheated south wing was transformed into a public car park, which can be adapted and used if more capacity is needed; a successful equilibrium of economy and ecology.

Assessment

The project unveils a new vision for the city, dissolving the boundaries between the built environment and natural spaces, while acknowledging the interdependence of its climatic conditions.

Chapex has been incorporated into a broader urban planning and transformation initiative, and perhaps unexpectedly, the extensive infrastructure now plays a pivotal role in the city's evolution into a green metropolis.

The project exemplifies how architecture can transform existing structures harmoniously. It serves as an inspirational lens for a society in the midst of transformation, highlighting the importance of reuse as a vital approach in our present and crucial journey towards a more sustainable future.
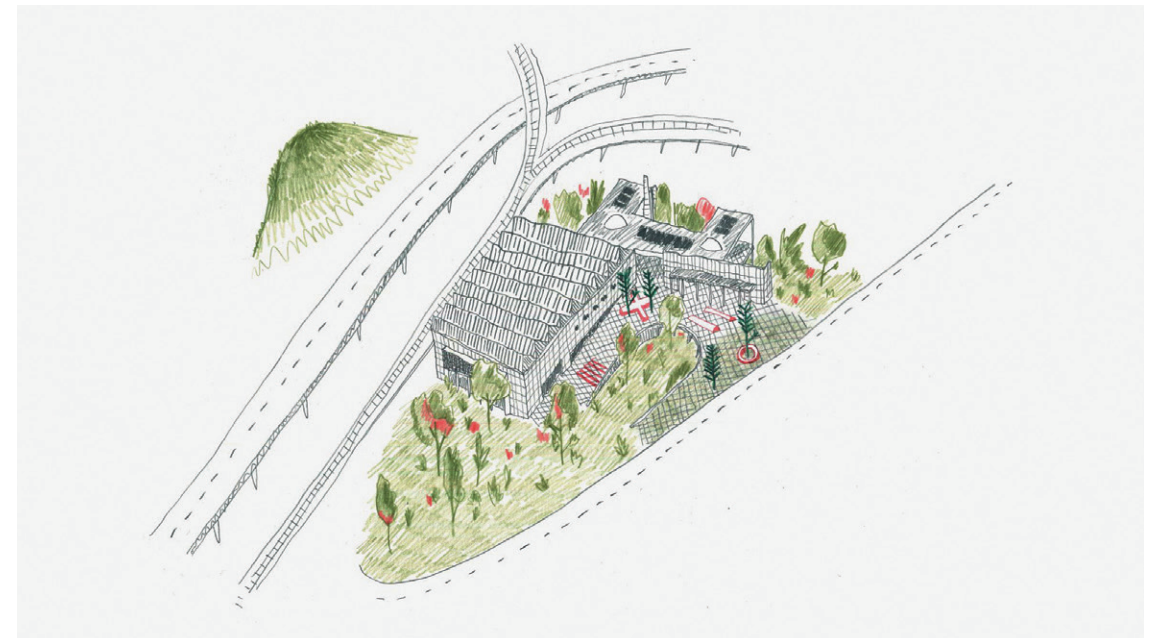
The Boca de la Mina promenade is located north of the Reus railway station and line, in the northwest of this city, home to around 100,000 inhabitants, within the province of Tarragona. The railway line was built in the 19th century, following the pre-existing path that led to the old fountain and mills. At the turn of the century, the construction of the train station altered the original course of the promenade. Later, in the mid-20th century, the station's expansion and electrification—along with the development of the current Avinguda del Comerç—transformed its morphology, leaving it disconnected from its surroundings.

Today, the promenade retains the original trees that were planted in 1834, and along its route, the same country houses built at the end of the 19th century for the bourgeoisie still stand strong, many of which were designed by the architect Pere Caselles. The promenade is known for its unique landscape and environmental characteristics, such as the two waterways, providing humidity and freshness, and the diversity of flora and fauna that create a highly attractive ecosystem.

Boca de la Mina Promenade
Reus Spain
Finalist

Author
Batlleiroig Arquitectura

Developer
Reus City Council

2022
Surface area 41,646 m²

Aim of the intervention

The revitalisation of the Boca de la Mina promenade sought to enhance this space of great natural, historical, and emotional importance for the city, fostering activities that infuse it with new life as a place of leisure, whilst preserving its identity.

To this end, three main lines of action were outlined. First, to consolidate its identity as a space for leisure and recreation, sport and healthy lifestyle activities, which respect the environment; second, to promote its cultural and historical value; and third, to preserve the agricultural traditions rooted in this area. This project was a vital part of the city's efforts to conserve its natural spaces, and aimed to maintain the promenade's current role as a recreational area, featuring soft sandy pathways and plane trees (Platanus), while also addressing the unresolved drainage problems.

Description

To establish an efficient drainage system, the project introduced a new section of the promenade that utilised the existing cross slope, directing water efficiently to retention and infiltration points via the newly designed lateral channels.

Although the trees and path are prominent features, this redevelopment's crowning jewel is the handcrafted brick paving, a material deeply rooted in the collective imagination and culture

of Reus. The different formats and patterns have provided diverse solutions and enriched the overall project.

The promenade's route lies adjacent to a series of natural, historical and educational interest points, such as the Font del Lleó, the Boca de la Mina, the ramblas (pedestrianised avenues) and the Catalan modernist houses. The proposal has successfully reinterpreted and amplified the significance of each of these locations. A new beach was also designed at the heart of the promenade to improve access to the nearby school. The redevelopment proposed two new spaces linked to the promenade: the Parc de les Olors, a tranquil space for rest and leisure that fosters a dialogue with the ravine of the mill, and the Hort Agrícola del Camp, an agricultural plot used to produce and teach about traditional crops in the region.

Assessment

The careful redevelopment of the new section of the promenade responded to various needs and objectives. Firstly, the drainage system now utilises both the existing cross slope and the new lateral channels, thereby prioritising functionality and environmental sustainability, with retention and infiltration points that play a key role in preserving water resources.

The handcrafted brickwork provides practical and durable solutions, giving the project a distinct aesthetic that blends harmoniously with the site's natural and historical context.

In addition, rethinking specific points of interest along the promenade has enriched the experience for visitors and local residents alike.
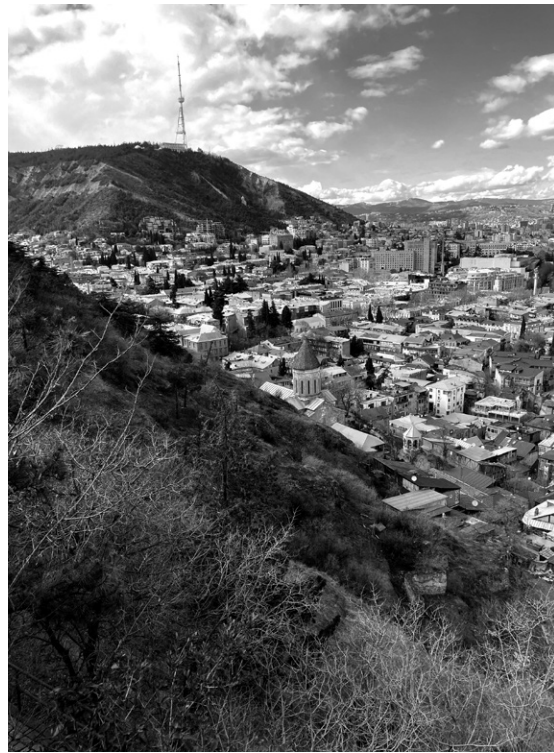
Finally, the introduction of a new central square and the expansion of green spaces, such as the Parc de les Olors and the Hort Agrícola del Camp, has not only improved the promenade's visual appeal and functionality, but it also offers new community spaces for interaction and leisure activities.
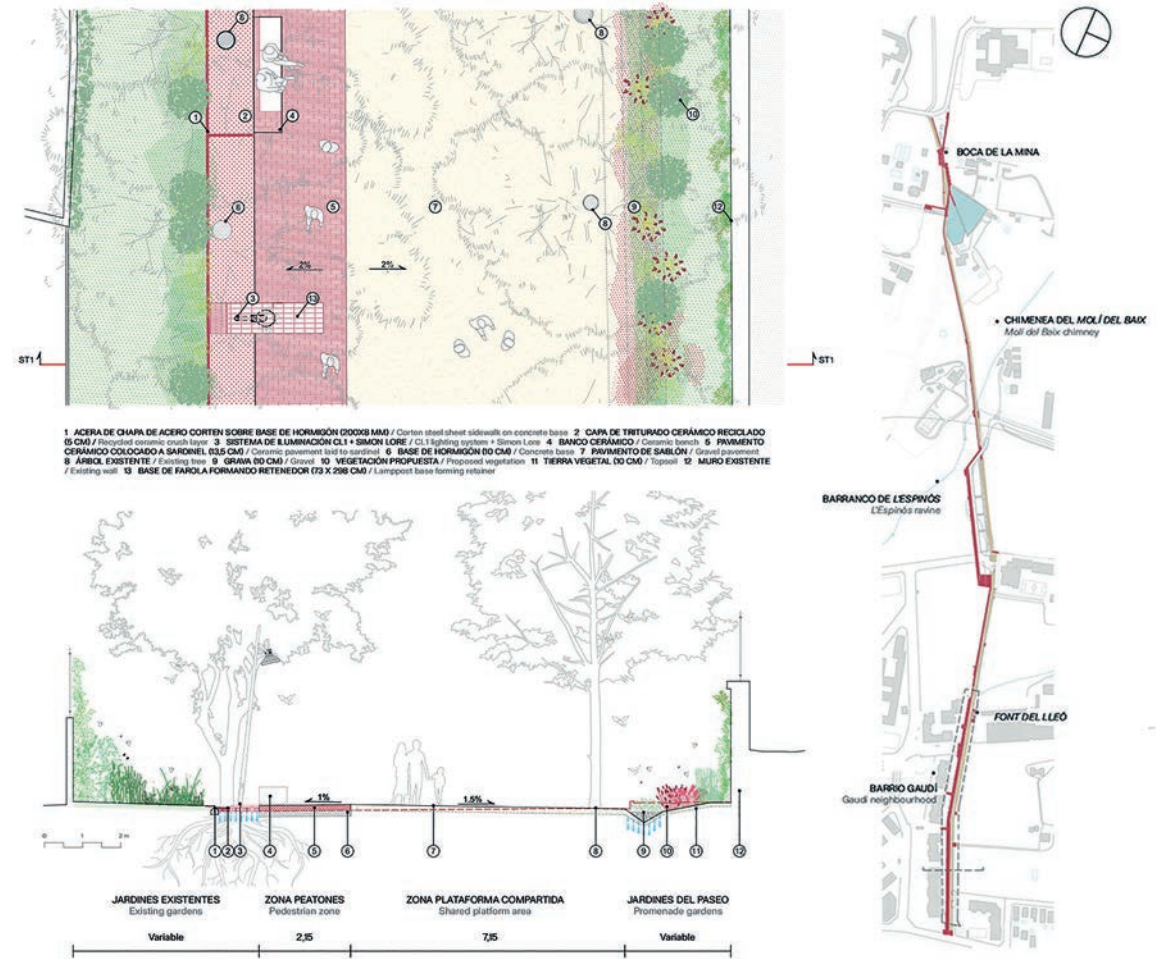
Plan of the intervention

Previous state

Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, is surrounded by Mtatsminda Mountain, a 700-hectare area characterised by steep terrain and rocky soil. In the 1920s and 1930s, pine trees were planted in and around the city, a practice that continued from the 1940s to the 1960s as part of Stalin's Great Plan for the Transformation of Nature. This reforestation project aimed to combat erosion and stabilise water supplies in the semi-arid landscapes of the USSR's east. As part of this initiative, Tbilisi officials planted a monoculture of black pine (*Pinus nigra*) on Mtatsminda, using dynamite to create planting terraces on the mountain's steepest slopes. The pines added organic matter to the rocky soil, changing its composition, especially within the planting zones.

When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1990, the ensuing political and financial chaos led to the degradation of urban public spaces across Georgia, including Mtatsminda Mountain. In 2015, the ageing pine plantations, affected by pests and fungi, experienced mass die-offs, becoming both a fire hazard and a public safety concern.
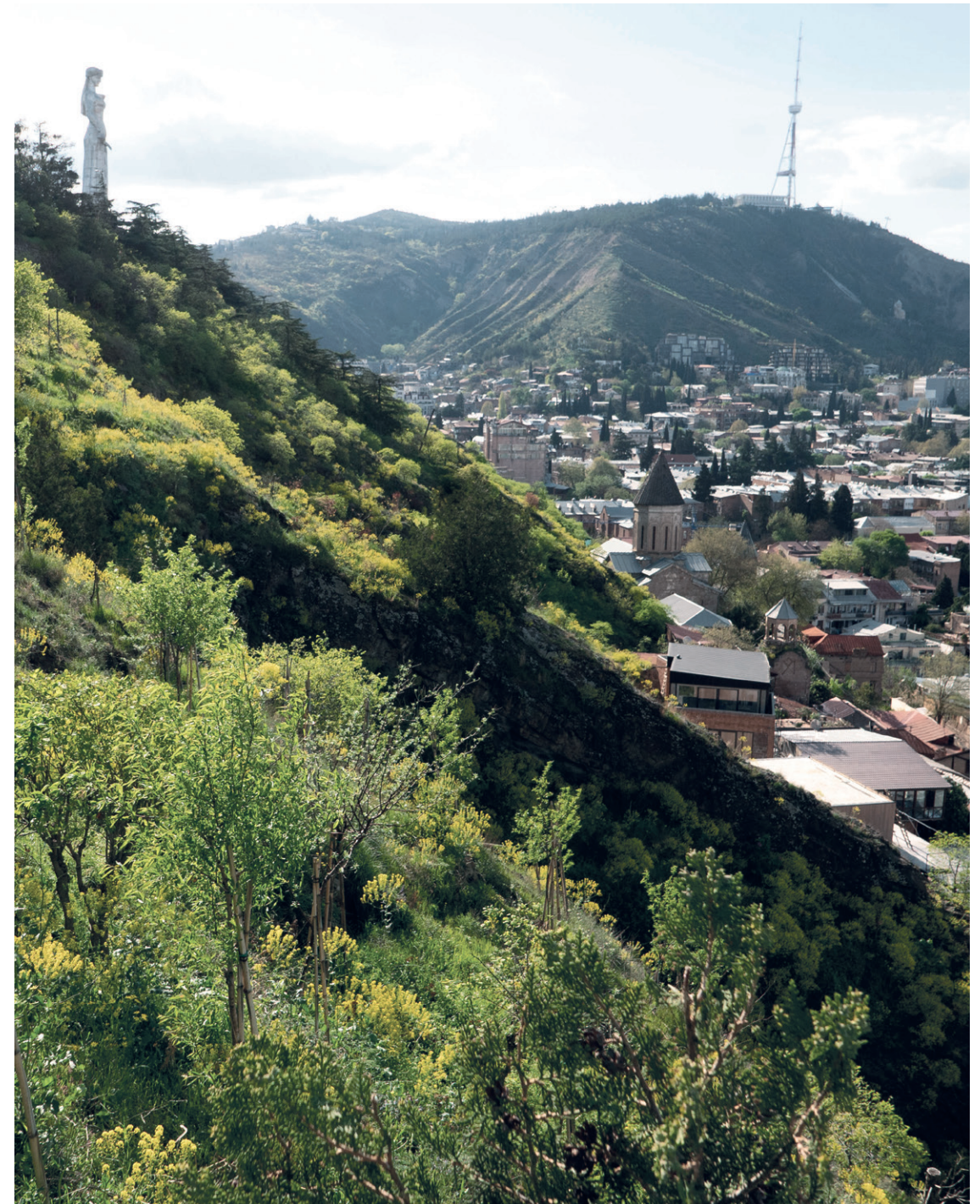
Urban Forest
Tbilisi Georgia
Finalist

Author
Ruderal

Developers
Tbilisi City Council, Cartu Foundation

2023
Surface area 88,000 m²

Aim of the intervention

The Tbilisi Urban Forest project aimed to improve habitats for biodiversity, increase resilience to climate change and create new recreational opportunities for locals and tourists. In 2020, Tbilisi city officials proposed a plan to replant the 700-hectare urban forest with nearly 40 native and climate-adapted species. This would improve public amenities such as campsites and hiking trails, and protect the land from further degradation and private development. A research team of planners and scientists assessed the conditions and produced a detailed ecological restoration plan, including measures to stabilise and rehabilitate the informal network of paths and shelters.

Tbilisi-based landscape and urban planning firm Ruderal was selected to design the pilot reforestation projects, developing and testing an innovative approach to urban reforestation that would integrate ecology, technology and aesthetics through two on-site planting initiatives.

Description

The proposal was for a strip planting system designed with ecological and cultural considerations in mind. Areas of diverse plant communities were adapted to the specific soil and slope conditions within the urban forest. Existing trees were integrated with new saplings, shrubs and plants to create a multi-strata habitat for wildlife and a rich and welcoming environment for visitors.

A parameter-based design tool was developed to visualise planting scenarios, optimise species mix according to nursery availability, and simulate how the plantings would evolve over time. This innovative tool is adaptable for future reforestation efforts across Europe.

Unlike other urban projects that use imported trees, this project directly supported indigenous plant nurseries and strengthened the city's connection to its surrounding ecosystem. This local approach also dramatically reduced the project's carbon footprint.

The reforestation strategy included the use of "nurse plants", fast-growing species that provide shade and protection and improve soil conditions
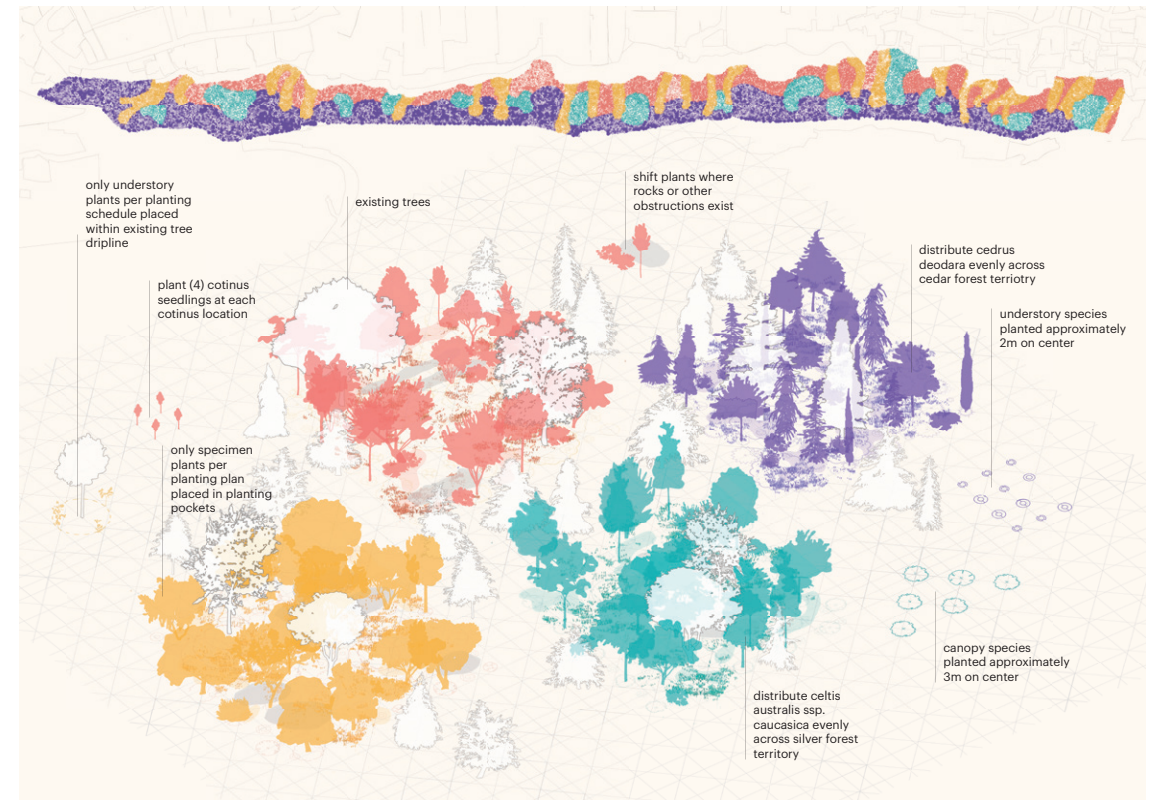
for new seedlings, increasing their survival rate. These plants provide early visual evidence of the project's progress and impact.

Assessment

The transformation of Tbilisi's urban forest demonstrates that, despite the challenges of implementing a project of this scale and complexity, it is both possible and beneficial to approach public space from a perspective that recognises biodiversity as an urban asset. In addition to improving the forest, the project also became a laboratory for developing advanced tools that can be used in near-future situations requiring similar transformations.

Although initially controversial among local residents due to the difficulties of implementation, public perception has improved over time. Regular users of the trails are now the first to comment on the benefits of the project.
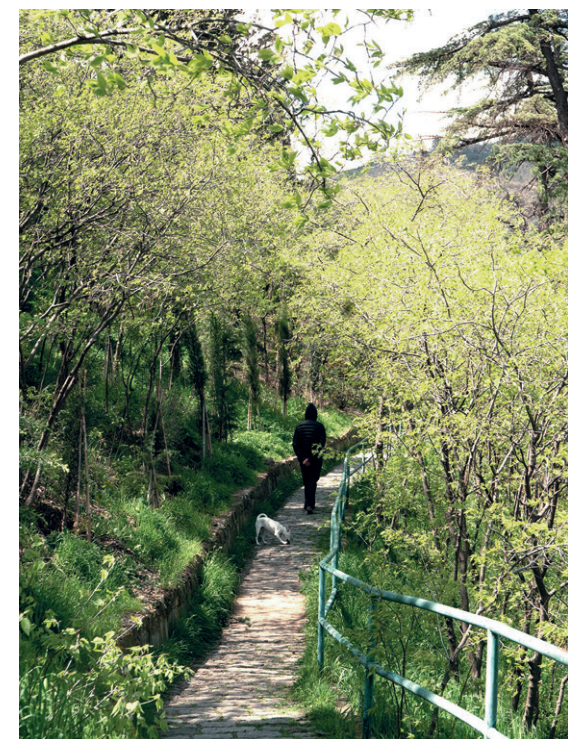
Beach improvement and redevelopment of the harbour edge
Porto do Son Spain

Authors
RVR arquitectos, CREUSeCARRASCO

Developer
Portos de Galicia - Consellería do Mar - Xunta de Galicia / Concello Porto do Son

2023
Collaborators CREUSeCARRASCO_ Sara Escudero, Alicia Balbás, Elena Junquera, Miriam Núñez, Mónica Rodriguez, Iago Otero, Laura Fernández, Alba Pérez // RVR_ Andrea Vázquez Costas, Teresa García Vega, Rebeca Juncal, Carmen Oimil // Otros técnicos Félix Suárez (Estructura) // Roi Martinez (Ingeniería Paisaje) // Luis Durán (Ingeniería Instalaciones)
Surface area 81,000 m²

Seafronts Category Winner

Previous state

The urban development of Porto do Son, a town in A Coruña in northwestern Spain, was shaped by the fact that it is a natural harbour. Historically, the town's beach—known as Cruceiro Beach—extended up to the buildings of the old town, reflecting its close links with the fishing industry. In the mid-20th century, the needs of the port evolved, requiring more space and a deeper draught. This led to changes such as the construction of embankments and breakwaters that pushed back the original coastline. The breakwater built in 1980 further altered the landscape, creating a park and distancing the beach from the town. A promenade with a wall was also built to prevent sand accumulation, but the seafront suffered from poor integration of uses and spatial conflicts. Over the following years, the area retained its historic structure, but also underwent significant changes. These included the expansion of the port and the addition of an access road, as well as large apartment blocks and car parks that cut the town off from the sea.

Aim of the intervention

The project had a twofold objective, taking into account the diversity of the Porto do Son coastline. The first was to create a system of controlled dunes with native vegetation between the park and the beach. The idea was to bring nature to the seafront, which had previously been dominated by a strip of pavement and a wall. The second was to improve access to the beach and resolve the conflicts between the port activities and the growing commercial and residential development.

In the renaturation zone, sand had been encroaching on the park for years, leading to the demolition of the promenade between the two areas. The project focused on creating a transitional stretch of land that would act as both a protective barrier and a link, identifying dunes as the best solution to harmonize the space.

In the urbanised port area, the project aimed to improve access to the water and resolve the conflicts between the port activities and increasing commercial and residential uses. Along with the development of the avenue, a new port services centre was planned.

Description

Along the park and seafront, the morphology of a dune system was recreated by depositing fine sand to form mounds in two staggered rows. Wickerwork structures were installed at the base to allow the dune to grow and consolidate. Native dune species such as marram grass (*Ammophila arenaria*) were planted to stabilise the dunes over time and create a dynamic balance. As a transitional space, the new dunes required well-thought-out access points, so three wooden walkways were built to connect the urban spaces with the park.

Near the market, a wooden structure recalls the town's old drying racks for fishing nets and serves several purposes. Two new surfaces have also been added—one of stone, the other of earth and trees—and a path leads to a car park and the new Port Services Centre, designed to create a viewpoint towards Monte Louro.

Plan of the intervention
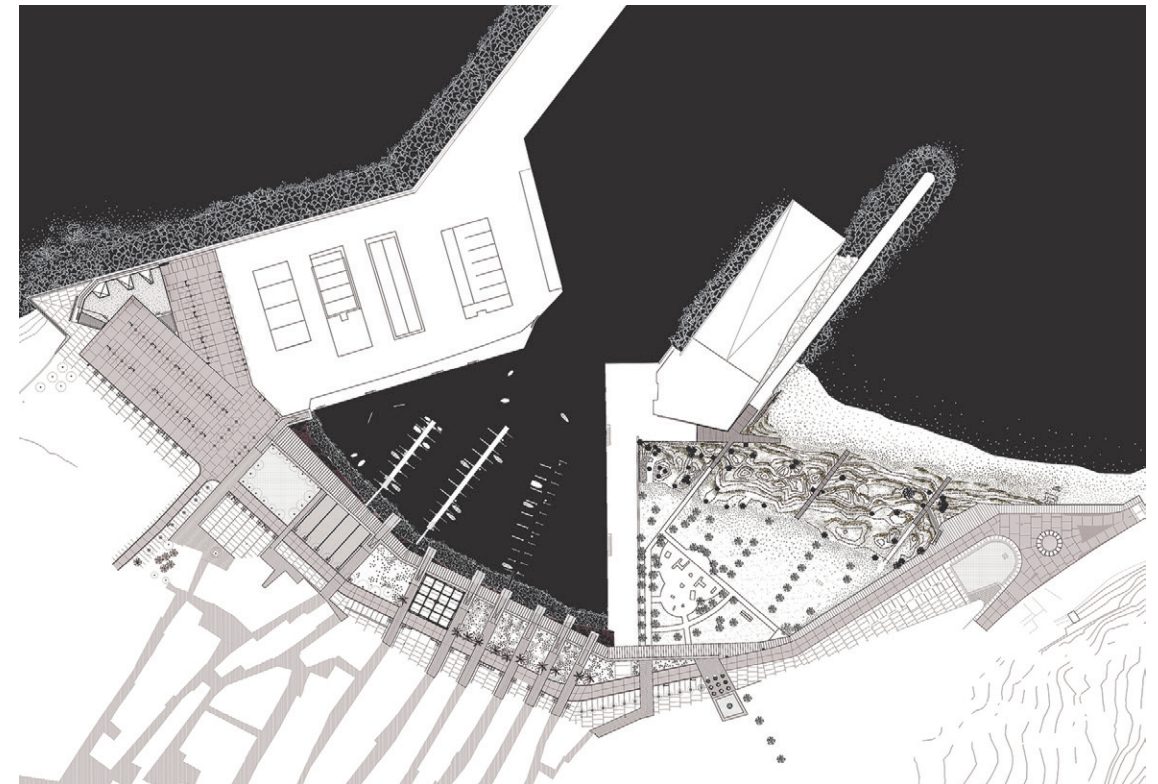
Assessment
This project focused on the environmental recovery of a coastline where architecture harmonises public spaces with varying degrees of urbanisation, while respecting the constantly evolving coastal environment. The restored dune system serves as a natural transition between the beach, the park and the urban centre, acknowledging the fragility of the substrate. This small stretch of coastline has become a catalyst for wider change, improving environmental quality and access to the beach. The project has raised people's awareness of the importance of their public spaces and their relationship with the sea. By rethinking access to the centre, with the Cruceiro viewpoint and a central space extending towards the beach, the project has redefined the identity of the seafront, culminating in a reconstructed coastal embankment that had lost its main points of interest.

Juan Creus, Covadonga Carrasco (CreuseCarrasco) and Marcial Rodríguez (RVR Arquitectos)
in conversation with **Míriam García** Member of the Board of Experts

MÍRIAM GARCÍA (MG)   In a way, this project has made visible things you've been doing, thinking about, and researching in Galicia for a long time. I'd like to talk about some of them.

/PLACE   The idea of territory as origin, the element shaping the identity of projects, and also cartography and maps, as a principle.

JUAN CREUS (JC)   Well, a splendid cartography that we often use is the Geometric Chart of Galicia by Domingo Fontán (1845). We draw a lot of the coastline and the edge of the sea and we always draw these references from the sea, seeing the land from the water. Fontán does this but he always adds the interior landscape of Galicia, showing the most important and emblematic elements. He gives an excellent representation of the key elements of the territory, and we try to do that too. The same thing happens with architecture and the Porto do Son project is very much connected with this. In the end, Monte Louro, el Barbanza, and la Ría de Noia always appear. Anyway, all the sea, starting with this Ría de Muros y Noia, links up, as you put it so well, with our estuary, the Corcubión, where we've also done a lot of work. So, yes, we know this territory quite well, and we always like to be able to represent it again, and thus to be able to recognise these identities we believe the project brings out. These aren't only identities at the territorial level but also, in this case, very specific to the place. Porto do Son was a very muddled place and needed "cleaning up" and a certain resignification of its more specific parts. We were also fortunate in that

there were historical references, as elements like the *secadoiros* (drying frames) and the remains of the walls of the docks and the *Cruceiro* (beach) were already there.

MARCIAL RODRÍGUEZ (MR)   Fontán's map clearly shows the importance of the estuaries, this very particular formation we have in Galicia, and the project is closely linked to that. The Muros-Noia estuary is limited on the southern side by the Serra do Barbanza, while Porto do Son is on its western ridge. This ridge has the particularity that it slopes steeply down to ocean, which reduces the space where the different settlements are located, and they are very much oriented to the interior of the Muros-Noia estuary. The Noia-Porto do Son-Ribeira road (AC550) runs along the coast and connects all the towns that are located by the sea along the Serra do Barbanza ridge. On this coastline running from north to south, the landscape patterns are very similar, the beaches have the same dune systems and small promontories, which is where their natural harbours are formed. The whole landscape is the result of this natural condition. The nucleus of Porto do Son originated around one of these promontories, which provided a magnificent natural shelter and a beach that extended alongside the buildings that made up the façade of the village which faced the sea, in such close proximity that the sand was pushed into the narrow streets that ran perpendicularly down to the sea. These natural conditions also protected these streets from the most adverse winds. This very peculiar urban configuration expresses the intense relationship with the seagoing activity of this fishing village throughout its history which, to a certain extent, marked its character and identity (salted fish, construction of schooners, drying nets, and fish, etc.)... However, over time and with a series of landfills, this connection was distorted and this was the context in which we started to work.

COVADONGA CARRASCO (CC)   In order to explain the place, we also used a series of images (from the earliest ones we found through to the present), showing how the territory has evolved in its uses, and how people relate with it. You can see how, in the beginning, the town, the beach, and the sea were a whole, and very directly connected. The sandy area was a place of work, of leisure, and even of ritual. Some photos show the procession

Geometric Chart of Galicia by Domingo Fontán (1845)

along the beach to the small church at the other end of the curve. It's a vibrant place. Over time, this transversal relationship between town and sea was breaking down, a new axis perpendicular to it (the road) was created, and the difference of level even appeared where there was once a continuous ramp going down to the sea. It's important to understand this transformation, which set in over time, emphasising more the longitudinal axis parallel to the sea than the original transversal one.

MR   The longitudinal axis that delimits the maritime facade, and which eventually became the main access to the village, appeared in 1930. Before that, the village was entered from the old road connecting Noia and Ribeira, which ran behind the buildings, crossing the centre of Porto do Son through the main square which is inside the urban structure. The appearance of this axis that directly enters Porto do Son from the Noia-Ribeira road, running right next to the façades, creates a barrier between the streets going directly down to the sea, and the beach itself. Over time, this situation became pathological, so to speak, when the road became the main access to the town, and this persisted until our Porto do Son project. Before, the streets and beach were connected, to the extent that sand got into the transversal streets. The oldest people remember that they quite often had to clear away the sand with shovels so they could enter their houses.

MG   **/SHORESCAPE   I'd like to talk about this deep knowledge of landscape, which basically explains the ways of inhabiting a territory over time, and this desire to represent it again through the project, to show a way of regenerating the landscape in tune with contemporary needs, but deeply rooted in its identity, its character.**

JC   In the work we usually do, and especially in public space, there's an educational component in what you're saying. There are parts of the project, the lookout for example, that are not only functional but also didactic in that regard. Until we

intervened, a person walking to Porto do Son didn't look at Monte Louro, didn't know the territory in this way. So, the aim of the lookout was precisely to let townspeople and visitors know more about the territory.

MG   **/WORKING AT THE LIMIT SO THE LIMIT CEASES TO BE A LIMIT   Spaces are transformed and cease to exist, and limits are claimed so they can be resignified, for example by removing the parapet to do away with the barrier between town and sea, changing the limit between town and beach by incorporating the dunes, and transforming the 45-50 cm difference of level into a bench that becomes a threshold. I'm interested in this idea of working at the limit so that the limit ceases to be that. I think the project has many well-resolved limits on every scale, including the construction details.**

JC   Sometimes they even contradict what might seem more logical but we believe they should be dealt with differently. One example is inclining the pavement in the opposite direction to the sea to create a bench facing the sea. This work with the limit sometimes requires a kind of reverse turn to produce something new, in this case, closeness to the sea, as with the breakwater. It's about looking at the territory in a way that goes beyond purely functional requirements so people can reconnect with places.

CC   The project can be read very clearly in its entirety but, at the same time, it also consists of small enclaves, specific solutions at every point, which give it nuances. It's easy to understand at first because of its radicalness, and its power, but it has more details, like small surprises, that you have to keep discovering.

MR   The limit of today's beach was established in the 1980s and was very clearly demarcated with the completion of the landfill where the current park is located. However, nature's limits are not so clearly defined. They are more diffuse, so the idea of regenerating the area involves blurring

the boundary between the park and the beach, and integrating the dunes. In our projects, we always try to do serious research beforehand, to analyse the forms that come to us, to see where they're from and why they're like that, so we can then decide how to work with them. I think it's very important to understand the landscape that has come down to us. This is related with the identity of places. We need to understand the different processes and transformations of the place if we're to act with good judgement.

MG   **/GEOMETRY   There's another matter I think is very Important, which is the clarity of geometry as a reference for the scale of the town and for the exploded views, the use of geometry as a strategy for providing standards and guidelines for the development and implementation of the project.**

JC   Throughout the project, geometry helped us to make the appropriate and precise changes of scale. The geometry is very clear. The exploded views, for example, appear almost from the large scale with references which give you the general lines. In fact, geometry is the basis of the construction and, in a public space project, it allows you to keep adjusting the scale without losing the order. Basically, we've done this project with what is virtually a single plan, a well worked general plan, with the general lines properly laid out, and the small, already initiated exploded views, to give the principles. Then there are the guidelines, which are more precise and no longer afforded by a plan produced with AutoCAD, but with a very detailed sketch, which is the next step. You use geometry again, but now in a more crafted way, introducing a new exploded view, or a new texture of material nuance, though the criteria come from the more general plan. This is also a part of the work we like because the location plan, the development plan always has a broader, more territorial reference while always keeping a more direct connection with local aspects as well. With the general plan, you also discover what the strategic places of the project are going to be. Marking out these criteria makes construction much easier, as long as you find someone who knows how to Interpret them.

MR   There is a pre-existing geometry on the site and we transferred this to the project.

CC   This geometry you mention can even let you resolve forms that, in principle, you wouldn't establish, for example the form of the building at the end of the promenade. This floor plan literally emerges from the geometry of crossroads, how the trucks leave the port, how they meet the road. This series of crossroads alone gives the building its shape.

JC   It's true that there's a difference between the project of the beach and that of the port because, with the beach, the geometry is centred on resolving accessibility, with three wooden walkways. The cross takes in a crossroads and there's a clear geometrical reference here. But, with the dunes, the guidelines don't come from a projection of where and how the sand will accumulate. This is where you realise that, in projects like this where nature will shape things, geometry isn't so necessary or, if it is, it's just as a guide, but not as continuity in the details of its development.

MR   With the beach, the geometry's more diffuse, and this appears in studies of the nearby beaches, how they're formed, and what kind of dunes they're generating.

JC   Nowadays, we have tools that give us incredibly precise geometric control over architectural representation. Yet, this hasn't been necessary here. A formal, dimensional reference of the evolution and formation of the dunes is enough. So, there's no need to define the project as something invariable because you know that this isn't the end. We architects still have much to learn.

MR   We're monitoring the evolution of the beach, how its shape is changing, how nature is shaping it. The dune is there to make the transition between the park and the beach. There was some concern that the park would end up covered in sand and would become a beach. But we eventually managed to stabilise the sand's encroachment into the park. I think we need a couple of years more to know exactly how the dune will work depending on the time of year.

MG   **/CLIMATE CHANGE   This is the first time the European Prize for Urban Public**

Juan Creus, Covadonga Carrasco (CreuseCarrasco) and Marcial Rodríguez (RVR Arquitectos) in conversation with Míriam García

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Space has had a Seafronts Category and there are not many projects yet that respond to the need to adapt to climate change, but there are fabulous waterfront projects that are sensitive with regard to the future, expressing the wish to move on and understand the boundary between land and sea as a space of management, of care, and of learning. I'm wondering whether, in this part of the work, you discovered anything that you'll see as an important component of your future projects. Do you think you'll incorporate uncertainty, monitoring, and care into your next project.

JC   The learning process in this work has been essential for us in its both phases, in the urban phase when we were including components of history, memory, crafts, and traditions and, of course, with the beach, where we worked in a different way, incorporating the actions of nature. I think we have much to learn about letting nature do its thing, including its way of working to achieve a good balance. What we've noticed in architecture recently is that there's an imbalance of forces, with construction taking precedence. Now we know that we must let the elements of nature work as well. The project expresses the fact that this way of working is a very important learning process for all of us. It shows the presence of architects but also the presence of nature. And we've let it get to work, and we've counted on the traditions of the place, with the participation of artisans, and net makers and menders who are helping to protect the dune. There's a kind of circular economy, but not just economy because it also involves culture, something like "circular culture".

CC   This also pertains to the materials, from the tradition and from the place, that we've used. Stone is traditionally the building material of ports. So, we build with stone, the way it was done in the past as a more crafted than technological approach, and we included vegetation, using local species that are accepted and present for the citizens. All of this gives the place another "temperature".

Portosin *secadoiro* (drying shed), next to Porto do Son, well-known image from Ruth Matilda Anderson's trip through Galicia in 1923.

JC   The stone comes from local quarries, which are very small and not destructive. We've done a lot of work with local craftspeople. It takes time and effort but it can be done, with a good dose of understanding and dialogue from the project.

MR   Working with local stone quarries, we're returning to the same material that was used to construct the oldest streets and buildings. As for the factor that appears in projects of a more environmental nature, namely uncertainty, I think we have much to think about and suggest, especially about whether it's necessary or not to construct in certain sensitive environments like the mouths of estuaries and rivers and, if necessary, how best to do so.

MG   **/EVERYTHING IS PLACE   In your project, I see adeptness in knowing how to choose. For example, everything is place in the whole construction, even the fixtures (which don't exist) because nothing is a "fitting". It's very difficult to make decisions and carry out actions like these in public space, where everything is so normalised and regulated (in our country at least).**

JC   This has a lot to do with the question of limit. Oddly enough, fixtures can be a risk in a project because its limits are breached when fixtures

are added and superimposed. An element that theoretically should be less aggressive, interferes with the identity of the place. The fixtures we propose must be incorporated into the work because they're part of the work and are within our own limits. This is a concern in all our projects, and we take care in this area. Of course, it's an extremely complicated matter when it comes to the administration. There's one aspect that still worries me because I think it hasn't been resolved, and that's the lighting. With lighting in a public space project, it's very difficult to get away from standard, commercial, industrial lighting. I think it's an area that's yet to be explored and worked on. What is projected and incorporated is part of the same idea that also allows sufficient degrees of freedom.

MR   Yes, it's not about fixtures per se, but more about elements that help to define spaces that can be interpreted as borders or boundaries, but they can also be pieces that protect a tree as well as seating.

CC   The interesting thing here is that any element can be used for whatever you want, with an imagination that's like a child's. Nothing is closed. Everything can be used for many purposes.

JC   We were talking about some references and, naturally, about Aldo van Eyck and his whole interpretation of fixtures, all of which provides a framework for us, as does van Eyck's connection with vernacular architecture which, in some sense, manages just a few elements but, with them, opening up a wide array of uses. There's a lot of that in this project. The base of the *secadoiro*, the stone foundations are, in some sense, like van Eyck's playgrounds, yet they have a function, a grassroots function, coming from tradition, from seaside construction, from driving a stick into stone. In other words, we always integrate the diversity of uses proposed by modern architecture with tradition. This is also the case with access to the sea. Traditionally, people used to go to sit on the rocks. And going from rock to rock, they reached the water's edge. We interpret the architecture so that it keeps functioning like tradition and, in this case, from entrance to entrance, from street to street, we approach the water in the same way.

CC   This search for freedom of use in fixtures led us—at the anecdotal level and speaking of these pieces you mentioned—to use some leftover pieces that were used for tree pits, big chunks of granite, cut into a semicircular shape, and we turned them over to make a bench. Their design allows them to be more than pieces for a single function They can be used for all sorts of purposes.

MG   **/EMPATHY   There's also respect for each element that makes up the project. This is transmitted and it also makes the user look upon it with respect, which creates empathy for the place and the elements that comprise it.**

JC   And it requires precision in design. This is why van Eyck was precise about his "open" design, and why we are too. Here, we get back to geometry. If you look at van Eyck's plans, you'll see that they're very synthetic, the geometry is crystal clear, so a guardrail is a stripe but it's also accurately placed.

MR   At the level of construction, design is essential. The details are very simple, with just a few elements. For example, the bases of the wooden structure, in the centre of the intervention, "O Secadoiro", have meaning. They are openings for draining water, the hollow space where the trunk is driven to avoid permanent contact of water with the wood, and also where wood and stone are shown without further ado. It is also important to achieve the simplicity that all these types of interventions in public spaces used to have in the past. In rural architecture, spaces were versatile and could be used for multiple activities. I think it's Important to recognise the dignity of these elements and leave them clear, without much artifice and without much technology. The wooden posts that used to be driven into the sand on the beach are now fixed in a piece of granite.

JC   Yes, it's like other places in Galicia, where they're driven in. In Muxía, for example, the drying frames are likewise driven directly into the rocks. They're living structures that need to be looked after. Our architectural works are also living things that require care, which is why our projects have to be didactic in this sense. In other words, the

Juan Creus, Covadonga Carrasco (CreuseCarrasco) and Marcial Rodríguez (RVR Arquitectos) in conversation with Míriam García

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works are really part of a collective which must internalise, maintain, and look after them.

MG   /CARE   The project is a mixture of clarity and also delicacy and care. Examples would be the nets that protect the dunes and the shed. I deliberately refer to care rather than maintenance, care that upholds traditional crafts and trades, thus creating a choreography that is in step with traditional knowhow.

JC   In the case of the net makers and menders, a workshop was held, and those who knew the craft passed it on the novices. This is both learning a trade and also covering a function, the temporary function of the project. It has been very interesting.

CC   With the dune consolidated, the net will disappear, but the new net makers will be left to learn a tradition that allows a new use.

MG   I wasn't sure whether including traditional skills in the design of public space was a strategy—so that the community would embrace it, make it theirs, look after it and make sure others would too—or a romantic idea of mine.

MR   In fact, incorporating traditional and local trades is an important strategy.

MR   Imagine what it meant to place a simple net. The association of net makers was involved and, in some sense, made part of the work their own. It's bridging the gap with the past when citizens themselves built their spaces. I believe that the nets, which were installed as an ephemeral barrier, will remain until nature absorbs them.

MG   /SHORELINE   I'd like to know if you've had any thoughts about shoreline projects because of the Prize.

JC   There are projects which, even if they're obviously about the water's edge, don't come up with a strategy for resolving the Interior-exterior relationship. We strongly believe that the shore must be able to relate transversally. Construction

mainly in a direction running parallel to the coast has created many barriers and obstructed the logical development of nature. Obviously this is a learning process. By this I mean that any shoreline project today must be clear about this strategy of the interior-exterior relationship, and the importance of not creating barriers. The question of how the boundary is approached, this need to understand not only the coastline but the space that lies behind it, is essential. Moreover, it's also necessary to remove things, to engage in projects of re-naturalisation and dismantling, taking away certain works of architecture or constructions so nature can do its work properly. Much care is needed with invariable references of the territory. They're important and they have to be there, and this must be a premise of any boundary project. It's not only about a functional need of the administration, but it must always be present as a cultural need as well. The question of environment is a matter of both culture and territorial reference.

CC   Yes, and it's also about continuity of the use of material in these spaces over time, and maintaining a way of working that has to evolve, but that also comes from what we must already know: where it comes from, how it evolves, that it has a future, and how to work with it in the present. This is a line of work that doesn't end, and we don't need to interrupt it as it has its own evolution.

MR   There's a lot of pressure on the shoreline, and this construction stress must be eased. For example, the path that connects with the seafront of Porto do Son at the Tendedeiro lookout is an old track that runs along the edge of the coast and reaches the ancient Iron Age Castro settlement of Castro de Baroña. This track was restored by repairing old paths that existed between the cultivated fields that had fallen into disuse. In many parts of the route it goes inland, leaving the coastline untouched, respecting the land structure of the territory. Moving away from the coastline, passing through the inland cultivated fields, perceiving the different shapes of the territory, crossing its different micro-landscapes is, in short, a way of understanding the

genetics of the identity of the landscape. The initial intention was that this path would follow the coastline, even though it meant having to open many new stretches, but fortunately, the concept of the project was changed when it was decided to maintain the territorial structure and recover the cultural landscape. The coastline is still a part of the territory and the relationship with the coastline depends on the circumstances of each site. There's a lot of pressure on the virgin territory we still have in Galicia. So, we need to be careful with how we go about these projects. We think that creating this new modality in the Prize is very important as a space of reflection.

MG   /TIME   In the present context of global warming, any work in an ecotone makes it a laboratory that expands thinking and anticipates futures. In terms of time, the time between past and future where the project moves, how do you convey this, or is it more of a surprise? I've seen that many of the project's drawings are set in "other times", so do you express this as a forceful Idea of the project from the beginning, or do you prefer that it appears afterwards?

CC   The drawings you mention are prior to the work, and what surprises even us, is that drawings that are sometimes set in other times, end up as a photo of the work. I believe in the power of the idea, in the quality that makes it timeless, and the one that appears in those drawings is so clear.

JC   Detail leads us to constant work on the site. It's clear that the job of the architect in any project is to improve things but, evidently, a well-founded, well-drawn prior base must convey the precision that has to be reached.

MR   The wooden wedge, a millenarian item of carpentry, common to all cultures, was the key to solving the problem of stabilising the wooden posts in the structure of the Secadoiro. This was done by and subsequently monitored by the local carpenter. Although project drawings convey ideas and concepts, the reality on the ground is often different. Working a lot in rehabilitation, we find that as we go about breaking, restoring, and revealing, a whole series of things appears, opening up new perspectives. The important part is to have a

clear idea, a plan that can later be adapted to what emerges.

CC   It's true that people are obviously using it and there's no rejection. They, too, perceive the change and even forget what it was like before.

MR   In general, citizens are making the most of these spaces and enjoying them. Pedestrian movement within the area is very fluid. Elderly people with mobility problems, who have always had a close relationship with the sea, have regained contact with it as a result of the intervention. Porto do Son recovered a distinguishing mark of its identity by dignifying its seafront and for us that is the most satisfying thing.

MG   I think it's very interesting that this is a seafront project, presenting another way of relating with the waterfront in an urban setting, and doing this on the basis of the identity and materiality of the landscape.

JC   The shoreline is a highly valued but also very stereotyped place.

CC   In fact, the problem that Porto do Son was facing is a general one for villages and towns in Galicia, the ones on the estuaries, which have come to a point of fragility and loss of identity in their relationship with the sea. What we have done, we think, is to present a good solution. It doesn't have to be a solution *per se* but it does offer alternatives and hope for change.

MG   Although the project is anchored in the place, it also has archetypical aspects on the coast of Galicia. These are strategies that can be repeated, that can generate new dialogue with the sea, a new vocabulary that can help to restore old stories and lost landscapes.
Many thanks. It's been a pleasure to speak with you and I hope we'll meet again very soon, in Galicia, by the sea.

Juan Creus, Covadonga Carrasco (CreuseCarrasco) and Marcial Rodríguez (RVR Arquitectos) in conversation with Míriam García

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Beach boulevard
Delfzijl The Netherlands

Redevelopment of Dún Laoghaire Baths
Dublin Ireland

Coastal Walk
Palamós Spain

Sea Park
Rimini Italy

Seafronts Category Finalists

Presentation of the Seafronts Finalists Works at the CCCB

Previous state

Delfzijl, a municipality in Groningen (the northern Netherlands), underwent an intense period of industrialisation following the Second World War. As part of this transformation, the port was relocated, and the city centre lost its direct connection to the Wadden Sea for many years.

However, the city's waterfront was in growing need of coastal defences due to rising sea levels and climate change. The sea dike reinforcement project in Delfzijl formed part of the national flood protection programme, known locally as Het Hoogwaterbeschermings-programma (HWBP). This milestone intervention presented both challenges and opportunities, as while the dike enhanced the visual barrier between the city and the beach, it also created the potential to improve the physical connection between the city centre and the sea.

Beach boulevard
Delfzijl The Netherlands
Seafronts Finalist

Author
LAOS landscape urbanism

Developer
Eemsdelta City Council

2021
Surface area 30,000 m²

Aim of the intervention
The primary objective of the new beach promenade was to enhance the connection between the city of Delfzijl with the Wadden Sea. Given the limited space available in this urban area, the programme's diverse needs required a holistic approach that encompassed landscape, architecture and civil engineering. At the centre of the project was the creation of a salt marsh landscape along the coast, with a second objective of creating additional habitats for animals and plants, while integrating civil engineering, spatial quality and ecosystem restoration.

Description
The sea wall was constructed partially inland and accompanied by reinforcement works to widen the existing beach. Its distinctive design features a meandering layout, with undulating lines that highlight the course of the promenade, which includes a cycle path and a pedestrian walkway. Topographical differences were safely bridged by these uniform undulations. The construction

of a new bridge for cyclists and pedestrians also significantly improved access to the city, creating squares and panoramic viewpoints that invite passersby to pause, rest and relax enroute.

Assessment
The Wadden Sea and the town of Delfzijl have a historic connection, reinforced today by the transformation of the promenade. The proposal's design incorporates visible links to the sea as well as metaphorical references, such as the introduction of maps in the paving, marsh patterns and a natural colour palette to strengthen the bond with the region's unique identity. This project has not only revitalised the area, but it has also created a living public space, now used as a meeting point for residents and visitors alike.

The project's success lies not only in its landscape and aesthetic quality, but also in its ability to foster unity within the city, act as a catalyst for new developments, and contribute to Delfzijl's entrepreneurial spirit.
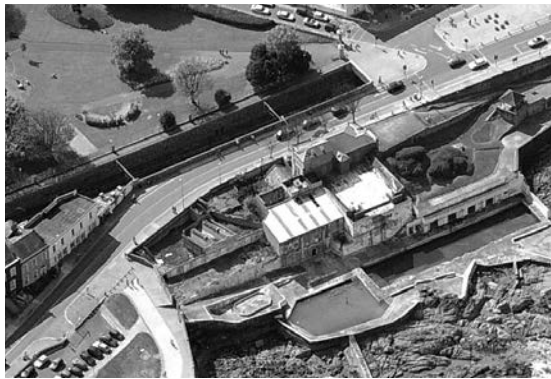
From the 1840s, the Edwardian baths at Dún Laoghaire were used as an urban spa dedicated to therapeutic health and relaxation. Since their closure in the late 1980s, they remained neglected and in disrepair, depriving the city's population of the opportunity to connect with the sea. The recent renovation of the Dún Laoghaire Baths is part of a comprehensive redevelopment plan implemented by the city over the past 20 years, aimed at enhancing its public spaces. In this case, the renovation sought to restore the lost connection between the city and its seafront, while ensuring accessibility for all.

Redevelopment of Dún Laoghaire Baths
Dublin Ireland
Seafronts Finalist

Authors
DLR Architects Department, A2 Architects

Developer
Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council

2023
Surface area 6,262 m²

Aim of the intervention

The primary objective of reconnecting the city with the sea and revitalising an area that had been neglected since the closure of the old baths, was to rehabilitate an existing pavilion and create a café overlooking the sea. The proposal was therefore to remove the obstacles blocking the town's view of the water and help bridge the more than nine-metre gap between Queen's Road and the high tide level.


Description

As part of the redevelopment, several dilapidated buildings from the former baths were demolished to allow sunlight to reach the main pavilion. This remodel connects the Newtownsmith promenade to Dún Laoghaire's East Quay through a series of levels, adding accessible stairs, seating areas for enjoying the views, green spaces and the restored pavilion. The site featured a steep drop with limited space between the road and the shore. As such, a lift and stairs were built to provide access to the lower level. This area now houses four artists' studios and a communal exhibition space. The outdoor terrace of the reclaimed pavilion café boasts views over the new pier and features a sculpture dedicated to Roger Casement, gazing out towards the horizon.

Today, the green spaces incorporate a biodiversity strategy, including wild pines, strawberry bushes, seagrasses and flowering plants. The café is the result of a collaboration between Happy Out and The Together Academy, a social initiative in Dublin that offers certified training and job opportunities for young people with Down's

syndrome. Several energy efficiency measures were also introduced, including energy-efficient appliances, enhanced insulation and heat pumps in the pavilion. Where possible, the project has preserved the pavilion's existing structure and has used materials that minimise the project's carbon footprint, such as a concrete mix containing 60% ground granulated blast-furnace slag (GGBS) and local aggregates like Dalkey granite and oyster shell.

Assessment

Dún Laoghaire now boasts a vibrant seascape filled with life, where locals and visitors alike can enjoy ice cream, stroll, chat, skate and swim. This unique public space immerses people in the sights, sounds and scents of the sea. The long benches, undulating terrain and changes in elevation create a theatrical atmosphere and offer a connection to the beach and water. This revitalised seascape and restored bathing area are here to stay and have become an integral part of the city's identity.
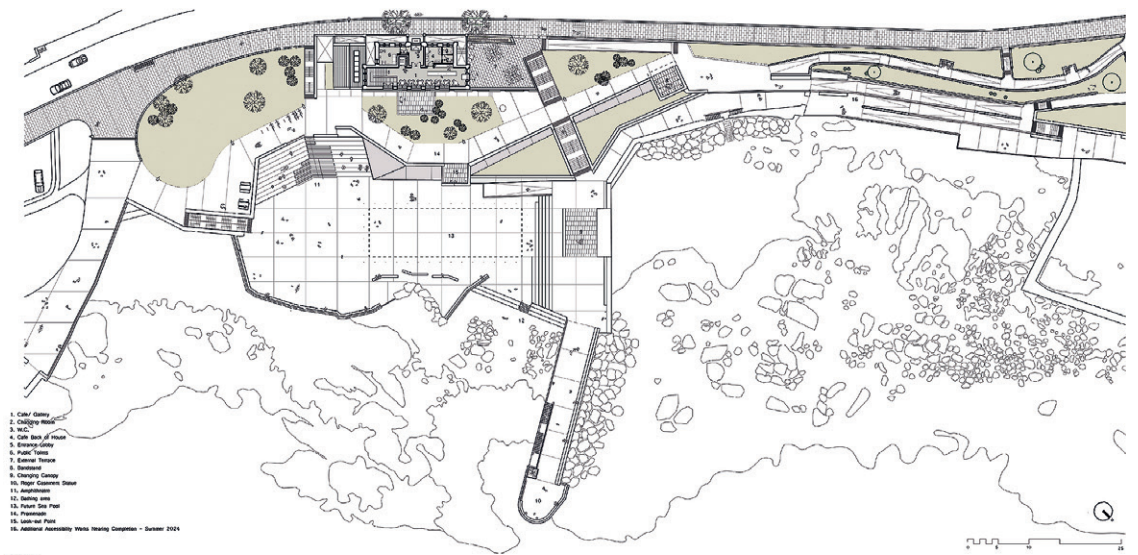
Previous state

The Costa Brava, a stretch of coastline in north-eastern Catalonia, attracts nearly five million tourists each year, making it one of the European Union's most popular destinations. This significant influx of visitors adds to the pressures it already faces due to climate change.

The paths that run along the coast in this area are known locally as the camí de ronda. The path included in this project is five kilometres long and connects the city of Palamós with the Castell Beach nature reserve. It traverses a unique Mediterranean mosaic of agriculture, forests, fishermen's huts and discreet mid-20th century housing developments. Although the landscape is protected, it suffers significant habitat degradation due to the heavy vehicle and pedestrian traffic.

Coastal Walk
Palamós Spain
Seafronts Finalist

Author

Ardevol Consultors Associats, Estudi Martí Franch Arquitectura del Paisatge SL

Developer

Palamós City Council

2021
Surface area 165,000 m²

Aim of the intervention

The aim of the project was to connect the existing sections of the coastal path into a single route linking the city, the nearby beaches and the nature reserve. This continuous path should help to preserve and enhance the coastal landscape for decades to come. The project sought to transform the path and its landscapes into a "grand site" that would celebrate the area's scenic and cultural heritage. Another goal was to reduce seasonal tourism by creating inclusive green infrastructures that can be enjoyed all year round, fostering a better relationship between society and the environment.

Description

The first of the project's key actions was the restoration of degraded habitats to create a richer and more refined landscape mosaic. This entailed the removal of invasive plant species from rocky cliffs to protect the EU's endemic coastal communities, and the diversification and rejuvenation of pine forests into holm oak woodlands on hillsides that were overgrown or encroached by cars. Another key action was the transformation of coastal walkways into mixed cork and holm oak woodlands with rich Mediterranean undergrowth, and the restoration of open coastal scrub habitat clearings through management and planting. In urban areas, the density of Aleppo pine forests was reduced to mitigate the risk of fire, and efforts were made to transition the forests to holm oak and cork oak, which were already present in the understorey.

At the same time, a panoramic coastal path of more than 4.75 kilometres was restored, linking the centre of Palamós to the Cap Roig Natural Park and creating an eco-social infrastructure that would preserve nature, promote health benefits and highlight the value of the area's natural, scenic and cultural heritage. The path includes 3.6 kilometres of new footpaths, connecting previously fragmented sections. The Castell Beach car park was also relocated and is now integrated into the agroforestry mosaic, and the former area was returned to agricultural use.

In addition, 14 specific projects were carried out in critical areas to restore parking areas, design transitions between town and trail, and create rest areas. Forty-two adapted crossings were created along the route, as well as 19 new viewpoints with discreet interventions but spectacular views. Finally, the project aimed to enhance the coastal landscape with minimal need-based interventions that would celebrate the materiality and uniqueness of the site.

Assessment

Despite accommodating many users—both locals and tourists—the landscape and nature surrounding the new path are recovering and people are increasingly changing their habits, choosing to walk daily and enjoy the sublime landscape, leaving their cars at home. Overall, the project stands out as an example of social infrastructure, nature restoration and landscape heritage conservation achieved without major investment and with limited resources. The project demonstrates a remarkable ability to preserve the landscape with minimal intervention and the potential to extend the urban experience into the natural landscape, seamlessly integrating the two.

Drawing of the intervention: 4.75 km of coastal path / 3.6 km newly restored / 1 zebra crossing. Fully pedestrian / 42 cross-sections / 14 specific projects / 19 viewpoints

Previous state
Rimini, a city in the Emilia-Romagna region of northeastern Italy, is one of the most popular tourist destinations on the Adriatic coast. With over 15 kilometres of coastline and numerous hotels, restaurants and other facilities, it has become Italy's top beach destination in terms of visitor numbers. Before the redevelopment, Rimini's promenade was fragmented, lacked a clear identity and cohesion, and did not fulfil its potential as a public space, failing to provide an attractive environment for residents and tourists. Furthermore, the lack of connection between the city and the waterfront limited its use and enjoyment throughout the year.

Sea Park
Rimini Italy
Seafronts Finalist

Author
EMBT Architects TEAM
Working group led by Benedetta Tagliabue - EMBT Architects with Massarente Architettura, Made Associati, Abacus and Sintel Engineering (Architecture, Environmental Urbanism, Landscape, Mobility and Engineering) for the Masterplan and the Integrated Design of the Sea Park in Rimini

Developer
Rimini City Council

2023
Surface area 23,458 m²

Aim of the intervention

The project aimed to transform the promenade into an urban park that would encourage both active and passive use of the public space. The goal was to create a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere where the beach, sea and vegetation would blend harmoniously. It was designed to promote culture, well-being and sport through various activities and functions that would appeal to people of all ages and in all seasons. Finally, it sought to help offset the effects of climate change by providing protection against rising sea levels.

Description

The Parco del Mare in Rimini has transformed the previously unstructured and fragmented waterfront into an urban park that blends seamlessly into its surroundings. Spanning over 6 kilometres, it reflects the city's vibrant character while providing a new identity and green urban

space for tourists and locals alike. The design features curved lines and soft colours that guide visitors along the promenade, with wooden and ceramic paving that highlights different themes in different sections and connects the park to the city. Specific themes are represented in the paving and squares, reflecting Rimini's diverse historical and cultural identities, from Ancient Rome to the Fellini era and beyond. Native vegetation, such as coastal flora, is integrated to provide shade and a natural setting for the promenade. The dunes gently connect the beach level with the higher promenade level can withstand the elements thanks to the low shrub vegetation. They have become essential to the promenade's plant life,

providing shelter from the sea winds and allowing trees to grow along the promenade above them. The dunes were designed in different sizes and materials, ranging from green dunes in the form of large flowerbeds to wooden and ceramic dunes. By maintaining the same form but varying in size and material, they serve multiple functions within the park.

Assessment

The redevelopment has revitalised Rimini's seafront, making it an attractive and accessible destination all year round. In an area under significant tourist pressure, it offers a space of well-being for both locals and visitors. The integration of natural and cultural elements has created a unique environment that promotes local identity and community enjoyment. In addition, the careful and sustainable design of the public space reflects a contemporary

approach to urban planning and tourism development. The park plays a crucial role in reducing the effects of climate change while mitigating the intense impact of tourism on the urban character and quality of the area.
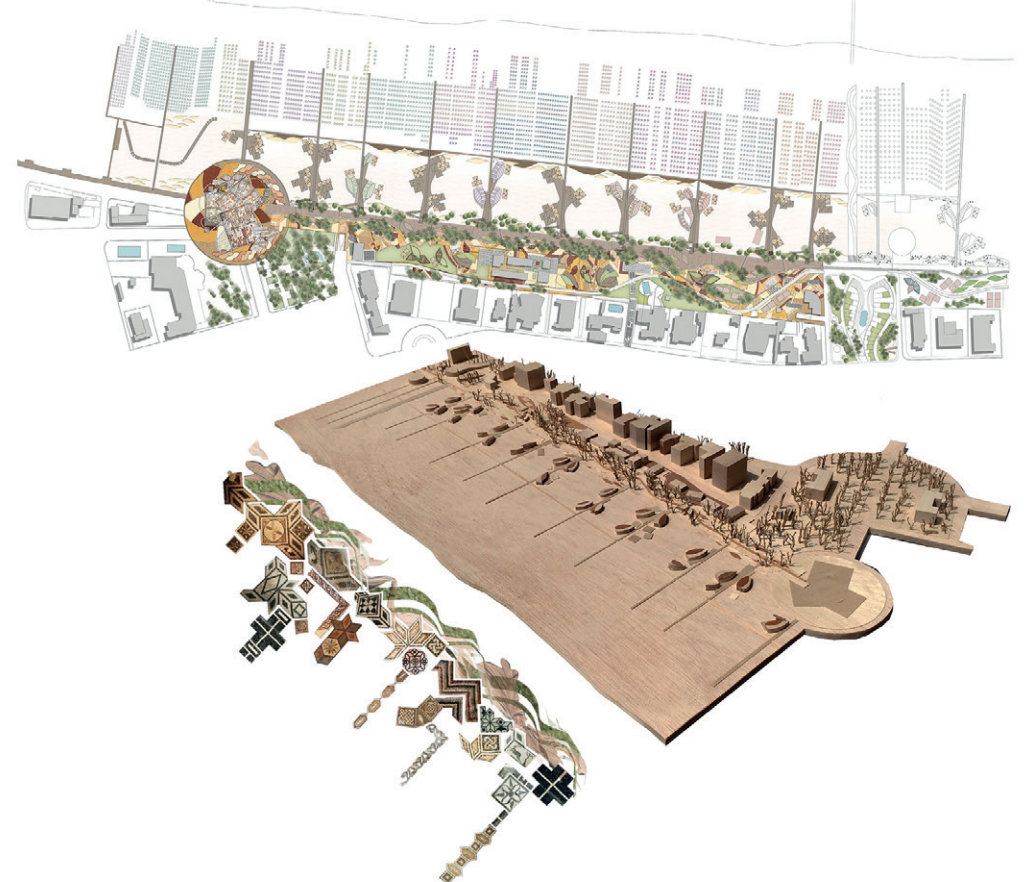
Beth Galí
Barcelona Spain

Sonia Curnier
Lausanne Switzerland

Fabrizio Gallanti
Bordeaux France

Žaklina Gligorijević
Belgrade Serbia

Beate Hølmebakk
Oslo Norway

Manon Mollard
London United Kingdom

Francesco Musco
Venice Italy

Jury reflections on public space

Deliberation process of the Jury at the CCCB

Once again, this year's European Prize for Urban Public Space offers an opportunity for checking the health of urban space constructed in Europe in recent years, with projects that have given us an understanding of the situation of new public spaces being proposed in the European towns and cities that presented for the award.

For many years now, designing urban spaces has been an exercise of architectural planning that goes beyond a purely landscaping exercise. The role of urban space is fundamental for the social and environmental quality of cities, but how to produce it remains the great enigma of democratic societies. Now, more than ever before, urban space projects must ensure that new proposals to resolve the problems of ever-changing societies actually do this. Moreover, they must even evolve rapidly beyond the dynamics of the public administrations responsible for producing and improving urban space.

Given today's economic difficulties and shifts in public priorities, we are grateful for the efforts made by many cities and towns to keep rebuilding their public spaces where the main beneficiaries are the citizens. Despite wars, natural disasters, and economic decline around the world, in the end, we shall always have shared spaces, places where citizens can meet in the midst of devastation. Hence, the commitment we have today is, in particular, to cherish everything that is public and collective.

Please bear with me while I stray a little beyond what I am supposed to be writing in this brief text. I am reminded of some words of Agustín Goytisolo, to which I refer quite often and which are even more relevant today: "In times of ignominy, cold and robotised cruelty spreads everywhere, but there are still people in this convulsive world who are listening to a song or reading a poem, and they know that this country is for everyone."

Transcending ignominy, then, we must keep working for the common good. Public space as collective space—this country that "is for everyone"—has much to do in circumstances like those that exist in today's world.

Discovering, among the works presented this year, those that stand out as bringing social and environmental benefits to cities, is what this Prize must contribute.

In this year's award, a large number of the works that have been presented show the good intentions of European public administrations that are increasingly opting for quality in the urban project as a generator of quality in the social domain. As for the works presented, and their particular quality as such, we must draw attention to the admirable ways in which design is shown in all of them. Nevertheless, there are some that have surprised us with their daring in taking a leap forward with their quest to discover the new needs of the contemporary city. Far from any attempt to impose or to make the social and cultural reality of the cities in which they intervene submit to the authors, these projects show respect and a certain discretion which, however, has made us question their effectiveness in the urban context. We do not find unique works among these projects works but a lot of those we have analysed represent different ways of thinking while, at the same time, having many elements in common. We see this in the use of materials, organisation of spaces, in a certain conservative way of linking uses to the way it is believed that citizens should use public space, without letting the citizens themselves create their own uses and needs.

We often wonder if this homogenisation has increased concurrently with the appearance of the Internet and certain architecture and public space platforms where only images are shown: images without an author, without a place, without an origin.

After 40 years of public space design in many European cities by means of what is known as urban planning—because of its especially architectural rather than strictly urbanistic values—urban spaces built in the 1980s have given way to an almost homogenous conception of public space in many European cities. In other words, we have shifted from the new ideas of the 1980s to present normality. Indeed, we have gone from experimentation to democratisation of public space.

The selection of works in this year's award seeks to highlight those that are not guided by the inertia of what has been done so far, and that make a reality of approaches adapted to the new social dynamics by resolving the environmental and structural problems of cities and towns, while also—and why not?—being designed with an aesthetic sense. This is a word that is difficult to use in this context but one that we must reclaim because of its unquestionable value in our professions.

There are many first questions that come to mind about the previous criteria we can establish and prioritise. Need we assess the suitability of the programme? The social links? Its needs? Comfort? Its innovation? Its risk? There are so many criteria that can be established a priori that we believe that it is appropriate to take a flexible approach depending on the work being presented. In other words, we should define and adjust the criteria in accordance with the project being analysed.

This year, for the first time, the Prize includes a new section giving special attention to seafronts, which are certainly of great relevance in the European context. They are seafronts that are not always easy to manage, especially in the case of projects where other administrations like port authorities intervene, where relations with local administrations are always complex. Hence, we celebrate this new addition of including ports and seafronts, understood as urban public space and improving their integration into cities.

This year's prize-winning projects rely on knowledge of the place to adapt to it, whether it is with the idea of continuity or establishing dialogue by creating a counterpoint. With both the prize for urban space and that for seafronts, the winners have shown great skill in being able to find the appropriate tone and scale for the places where their projects are introduced. They have understood the requirements suggested by the public institutions and, in each case, have contributed discourse that goes beyond simply resolving immediate problems. They work at the fringes of the latest fashions without renouncing contemporaneity.

The "Storm Park at the Warsaw Uprising Mound", winner of the Urban Public Space Category, is a demonstration of understanding of what a memorial represents. It is a space devoted to the memory of convulsive times.

The park is located on a mound consisting of the rubble left when Warsaw was destroyed in the Second World War. The project recognises the history of the place by reusing the ruins of destruction to construct a new park. With this decision, which is fundamental to the project, the place conveys emotional and educational values that connect with the memory of certainly traumatic events and that, looking to the future, offer new, accessible spaces for the enjoyment of citizens. It achieves this with strategies that are sensitive to the needs of the zone, a comprehensive integration of memory, leisure, and ecology by recycling the rubble that resulted from the years of ignominy.

The project from Porto do Son, a town on the coast of Galicia, winner of the Seafronts Category, resolves the unhappy coexistence, entrenched for many years, between the port activities and the town and thus constituting an almost insuperable barrier to urban activities. The project set out to remedy the situation and foster contact between town and sea.

Mention should be made here of the project's certainly bold and radical proposal in deciding to conserve the old seawall, a protection against an especially aggressive sea, by situating on its other side the new installations that give civic life to a space which, historically, was exclusively used for port installations.

To conclude, I would like to refer to a fact that is common to the construction of urban public space nowadays in the European context, by which I mean a wise response to present demands to achieve a certain overall ethic of moderation and—to be more explicit—of ecological socialism.

With this year's award, the European Prize for Urban Public Space has clearly shown the evident acceptance by almost all the participants of the real deterioration of the planet. They have acted rationally, working on proposals that aim to remedy the consequences of the present situation of climate crisis.

Moving in public space
Beth Galí

Whether revamping an existing place or creating one from scratch, the design of a public space always entails the ambition of enhancing urban life and improving the wellbeing of people. *All* people. Indeed, if the public nature of a space is to be activated, its improvement must benefit the entire population, ensuring that no group is excluded—or, worse, displaced—in the process. In a time of growing social inequalities, exacerbated by climate change and migration, how can we—designers, policymakers and critics—aim to create more just, inclusive, and liveable cities? How can we collectively foster stronger social connections, build vibrant communities, and cultivate a sense of belonging? The projects featured in this 12th award of the Prize offer insights into these pressing questions, reflecting the current state of practice across Europe and sparking important reflections on the future of urban transformation.

Providing basic amenities

The capacity of a public space to enhance people's wellbeing lies primarily in its ability to meet their fundamental needs. Sometimes, it is simply a matter of providing basic amenities which, still, are all too often lacking. For example, *Bench Invasions*, a performance carried out in Bruges, highlights the essential role that seating plays in our urban experience. Benches are more than just functional. They foster a sense of hospitality, transforming public spaces into places for socialising and lingering. But they also embody inclusion, enabling people with limited mobility to venture out and take part in urban life.

Through subtle attention to design details, such basic amenities can also become bearers of new uses. In the small village of Monte, which is characterised by an aging population, a minimalistic intervention—easing the slopes of steep paths and adding a handrail—provides better walking conditions for the elderly. However, this handrail also takes on a playful, multifunctional, and multigenerational role. Its design invites children to roll marbles through the railing and retrieve them at the bottom of the stairs. By focusing on the needs of a specific group, such as the elderly, this intervention enhances the village's overall hospitality, making it more pleasant and accessible for everyone.

The rapidly changing state of the planet and the evolution of society are constantly redefining these fundamental needs. With global warming, for example, we know how important the provision of cool urban spaces, as well as management of heavy rainwater, will be in the years to come. While these issues have become increasingly evident, my fellow jury members and I were surprised by how many of the 297 submissions we had to evaluate still overlook—if not ignore—them, raising the question: can we afford to continue designing urban spaces as we have been up to now?

Caring for the most vulnerable

Making cities more hospitable also means addressing the needs of the most vulnerable inhabitants. This requires not only a thoughtful design approach but, first and foremost, a sound definition of the tasks at hand and careful selection of sites for intervention. At the turn of the 21st century, the development of public spaces focused heavily on prestigious locations—or those intended to become so—frequently resulting in emblematic projects that, over time, led to the increased value of certain areas and, ultimately, to their gentrification.

Recently, there seems to have been a shift in focus, with the rise in initiatives—often more modest in scope, sometimes community-led—that prioritise the needs of deprived neighbourhoods, with the aim of improving their quality of life rather than transforming them radically. Increasingly, examples of exemplary public spaces, such as the *Parc des Brigittines* in Brussels, ensure that everyone has access to areas for socialising, playing, relaxing, and cooling off, just a short walk from home. When they are designed with simple means—but with great care—such spaces allow the inhabitants to develop a sense of place, community, and belonging.

The choice of a site can also have symbolic significance, as illustrated by an initiative that has now been promoted for the second consecutive time in the history of the Prize. In 2022, the *SubstandardPLUS* project in Bucharest, which provided facilities for the homeless, had already captured the jury's attention. While the original project was located on the outskirts of the city, its successor, *Space for Solidarity*, submitted for the 2024 award, is deliberately situated in the very centre of Bucharest. This pilot initiative offers essential facilities—such as a changing area, a gym, lockers, electricity, a notice board, and a table with benches—catering to both homeless individuals and other users. With its domestic character and its vibrant, colourful style, it brings the issue of vulnerable populations into the heart of urban life, fostering a space that encourages interaction, shared territoriality and, hopefully, more solidarity.

Open-ended designs

One of the main challenges for designers of public spaces, when it comes to enhancing urban life, is anticipating the potential future uses of a place. They need to equip spaces sufficiently for people to be able to use them, while allowing enough flexibility for unexpected forms of appropriation to happen, by avoiding overly deterministic design choices. However, achieving this level of openness is challenging, especially when clients or competition jurors expect a clear, well-defined proposal. Given the public investment in urban space and the political implications involved, there is often pressure to present projects that appear reassuring. Risk and ambiguity are typically discouraged in conventional design processes, yet they are essential for creating spaces that invite multiple interpretations and foster diverse forms of appropriation.

In this context, wastelands and derelict sites offer fertile ground for experimenting with open-ended design. Projects like the *Bijgaardepark Extension* in Ghent, the *Horta Provisional Market* in Barcelona, or the Exhibition Palace in Charleroi demonstrate this potential. These examples create flexible structures whose future programming and form remain to be defined and allow the final design to evolve through public or community engagement. This openness runs one risk though: that the space will ultimately be "privatised" through appropriations benefiting a happy few, while excluding many others. Care must therefore be taken not to compromise the very essence of public space, as the area evolves.

Openness can also manifest through innovative design approaches when working with reclaimed sites. In Warsaw, the re-use of rubble—leftover from WWII bombings—as construction material, along with preservation of the invasive vegetation that had overtaken the site, gives the *Uprising Mound Park* a raw, unpolished aesthetic. Upon completing the project, the designers realised that the unfinished character of the space enhances its inviting and adaptable qualities, encouraging people to invest it and act upon it.

These initiatives inspire hope that new forms of public space will find their way in our urban landscapes, creating opportunities for use, appropriation, and adaptation in an evolutionary perspective. They highlight the fact that, by its very nature, public space necessarily involves constant negotiation and, therefore, foreshadows future reconfigurations and adjustments. Consequently, the design (or redesign) of public space should never be viewed as a finality, but rather as a starting point, as an exploration of possibilities for an uncertain, yet desirable, common future.

If one uses wireless, noise-cancelling head-phones while walking around the city, they will automatically adjust the digital filtering of the surrounding noise, so sounds from the environment can come in above music or a podcast, thus avoiding catastrophic consequences: hearing the horn of a car helps to avoid being run over.

In February 2024, San Francisco based author, Rebecca Solnit, published in the *London Review of Books* a long article, devoted to the impact of automation in everyday life, with certain attention to the ways in which public space is affected by the omnipresence of digital technologies. The title of the article is "In the Shadow of the Silicon Valley" because what she lists is a series of historical events around the Bay area that have had, and are having, profound consequences for the whole world. Solnit intelligently draws a parallel between the development of technologies for driverless cars and the distracted way in which citizens wander round the city with their eyes glued to cell phone screens. With the sophistication of their sensors and software, driverless cars are supposed to protect pedestrians from being hit. In turn, pedestrians are less and less sensitive to their surroundings due to their immersion in the flow of information provided by their devices. This is a digital solution to a problem caused by another digital technology which, in all probability, will generate unforeseen effects.

In her essay, Solnit points to the deliberate cultivation of isolation and separation that the tech-world is imposing on us. She longs for a reappearance of the most banal daily occurrences: the casual chat with a cashier in the store, now replaced by automatic checkouts, or in cafes and bars that just do delivery and no longer serve customers in-house. But what resonates even more in her analysis, since it has now become a common experience, is the disengagement of humans from their peers due to constant stimulation provided by devices: any ride in a bus or metro, or time spent in a square confirms that

almost all of us are sucked into the universe of our phone, oblivious to our most immediate citizen fellows. What a dream for business! Individualised zombies, incapable of imagining any form of collective engagement, scrolling TikTok videos, playing Candy Crush, and spending money online. The possibility of public space as the quintessential locus for casual encounters and informal interaction is continuously eroded by such technologies, which are paired with state-of-the-art surveillance devices that aim to increase security. We might be physically together somewhere, but we are distant and distracted, evolving in contiguous worlds, while every single action is tracked by CCTV cameras and analysed by facial recognition software and AI algorithms, supposedly capable of predicting future behaviour, as in the 2002 film *Minority Report*. For late-stage capitalism, the system in which we live, public space seems to be an unavoidable nuisance. At best, it is still around so we can move bodies across places, at least in denser environments, because in any suburban situation it is already long-gone.

Solnit writes, "The Covid-19 pandemic worsened isolation, but tech had already made redundant many of the ways we used to congregate and mingle, while often portraying those ventures into the world as dangerous, unpleasant, inefficient and inconvenient." As it cannot be completely eliminated, or replaced by a world of suburban detached houses, driverless cars, and delivery drones, public space has to be shorn of its potentials for encounter and exchange, thanks to the instrument of technologies that encourage separation, supported by strict regulations about what can and cannot be done, and often subject to the management of private interests.

But it does not always have to be like that, because in fact, public space continues to have a powerful propensity to be the locus of gathering and mobilisation. If one returns to the Arab spring of 2011, the convergence of thousands of

protesters coming into squares and streets was, in fact, made possible by using social media in innovative ways, circumventing censorship and the conformity of the mainstream media.

Recent mobilisations demonstrate that streets, squares and parks are resilient vestiges of forms of collective action that resist attempts to strip them of sense. One can even say that public space can be a force against the digitalisation of our lives. In some circumstances, as with the actions by Extinction Rebellion since 2018, especially in London, the morphology of the city and its systems of infrastructure have been carefully appropriated to generate disruptions within the smooth apparatus of management of the urban realm. A few smartly planned blockades of roads and bridges have revealed the fragility of systems of control, thus demonstrating the possibility of giving back empowerment to the people.

In the past few years and in keeping with a long tradition of popular uprising, France has seen an uninterrupted series of actions. First, with the Gilets Jaunes movement in 2018—which, interestingly, displaced the sites of action from city centres to suburban areas—roundabouts often became the main sites of intervention. This example is particularly poignant, as it is political action that transforms a banal piece of traffic infrastructure, exclusively conceived for cars, into a temporary public space. In 2024, a new wave of demonstrations and strikes against pension reforms have brought millions of citizens into the streets over an extended period. These latter actions have followed more established formats, especially with marches across city centres, and speeches to crowds. Yet, the intensity and duration of the actions, keeping time with the rhythms of government and the parliament, are further proof of the effectiveness of the street as a means of social cohesion and political pressure.

In Spain, the streets have been the place for demonstrations about the conditions and uses being made of the city itself. In 2024, protests against the impact of mass tourism in Las Canarias

and Barcelona, and demonstrations against rising rents, in Bilbao and once again in Barcelona, created an interesting short-circuit where issues that are private and molecular in scale, such as access to housing, have become collective due to the capacity of public space to accommodate huge crowds of citizens and to amplify their message. Another form of collective mobilisation happened in and around Valencia, after the floods of 30 October 2024, when thousands of citizens volunteered to clean up the mud and debris in public spaces.

A downbeat reading of San Francisco by Rebecca Solnit and a possibly expanding list of people's mobilisations—for example in Chile in 2018, in Georgia now and, looking outside of Europe, in South Korea—which are all happening at the same time, are both equally valid. It is a matter not only of being optimistic but it is also about our own engagement in imagining a future that will go one way or the other.

But the bottom line is that all the new technological invention in the area of communication—the telephone, the radio, the television—has not yet "killed" the street as we know it.

Urban public space has always inspired architects, but due to its complex functional, social, environmental, and symbolic roles, it is an essential task for city authorities and planners. It significantly contributes to each city's identity and is the most democratic and influential form of communication, visible and accessible to all citizens. In the last decade, urban public space has gained one more critical role, namely that of a tool in the battle for greener, more sustainable, and resilient cities where living is pleasant and safe.

The focus on climate change in public space design is imperative. No areas or cities are safe from natural hazards anymore, and the recent disasters that hit European regions have shown that attention and local action are needed across the continent. Whether located on the coast or in the hinterland, in the more developed northern or lagging southeastern European regions, all cities face heatwaves, reduced water availability, severe rains, or urban floods. The submissions for this year's award show that urban public space plays an essential role in cities' adaptation to climate change, and their governments and designers have accumulated considerable expertise in exploring original climate solutions.

The candidates for the Prize addressed climate change challenges in various manners and locations, broadening our understanding of how to perceive and design urban public spaces. There is unlimited scope for research, innovation, and stakeholders that may actively contribute to addressing climate challenges while enjoying urban space. Cities, designers, and developers submitted a variety of projects, ranging from traditional city squares, streets, parks, memorial complexes, then quays and beaches, to revitalisation and reuse of historical complexes and industrial heritage, like the former slaughterhouse area in Ostrava, or temporary structures, like Nursery for 1306 Plants for Timisoara. The jury considered landscape improvements on the city edges, city woods, and even walking paths along coasts, addressing climate change, sustainability, or circularity. All submissions hold educational and environmental messages, whether urban, suburban, or artistic statements in natural environments, contributing to the debate on urban public space's role, character, and design in creating safer, more sustainable living spaces. Even projects belonging to a public realm in the broadest possible sense were considered, including public buildings, islands, woods, marshlands, public pools, etc. (Norwegian Scenic Routes, Gdynia Park Route).

Some ideas and proposed solutions that regional and local governments implemented for managing, protecting, or animating public spaces in European cities were surprisingly innovative, and these works will inspire the broader public to further adapt to climate challenges. Sophisticated design proposals for the revitalisation of historical heritage (Slovenia, Czech Republic), cemeteries (Poland), spatial installations with environmental messages (Slovenia), adaptations of roofs to become gardens, walking paths, and social places (Bulgaria, Netherlands) demonstrate the broad range of possibilities for enhancing the urban environment and its broader ecosystems.

As an urban planner, I focused on explicit solutions that contribute to city resilience and quality of urban life. Given how complex and demanding planning processes can be, the efforts and persistence of local governments to envision, plan, discuss, adopt, and finally implement innovative ideas in achieving more natural, pleasant, and climate-safe public spaces deserve special appreciation. These include the exceptional achievements of Barcelona in the implementation of the Superblock strategy (the Eixample neighbourhoods' green axes and squares), or long-term and inclusive revitalisation through the naturalization of the city centre in Tienen, Belgium, Almansa Park in San Javier, Garden Streets of Antwerp, etc. The jury noticed these projects for their systematic and persistent green strategy, pedestrian-friendly attitude, and landscaping, providing a pleasant outdoor environment while enabling drainage and collecting excessive rainwater. Commonly applied nowadays, nature-based solutions bring specific aesthetics, often less popular or commercial but beneficial for the resilience of urban systems and open public spaces.

Shelters for extreme weather conditions have become common in urban public space design, whether natural or sculptural. Cities like Reus, Versailles, Paris, etc., are familiar with shade-providing natural structures and proposed green infrastructure promenades, tree lines, parks, and urban gardens that address urban heat or floods. South European cities used the climate threat as an inspiration for designing multifunctional structures that improve and animate existing squares and new public spaces: they proposed temporary or permanent structures, like the Mediterranean Pavilion in Valencia and the Urban Architecture Festival Pavilion in Granada, which are at once urban sculptures, large, shaded areas, and venues for social and cultural events.

Standard climate change mitigation projects addressing sustainable mobility and circularity include Bridgefoot Street Park in Dublin, new parks in Rome, and Opera Park in Copenhagen, to mention only a few. Dublin used construction and other waste to assemble and design a new park and playgrounds for the neighbouring housing blocks. Upcycling the dumping ground for the rubble of Warsaw destroyed during World War II resulted in Storm Action Park, the winner of this year's award. Besides circularity, which brought environmental improvements, the project enhanced the location's cultural identity and created a new type of design for an urban park. In finding a solution to the revitalisation of industrial heritage, the CHAPEX project in Charleroi, Belgium, offered a proposal that saves the former industrial building, which was slated for demolition and tends to bridge the city's past and future, public and private realms, and inner and outer spaces.

Cities must also change their approaches to waterfront design for a more complex, multidisciplinary, and inclusive process that engages a pool of stakeholders and needs broader expertise to provide a safe yet pleasant connection to water. Two main approaches to coastal transformations include cases where urban tissue is close to the water and requires precise interventions to make existing quays safer but also accessible, attractive, and pleasant. Transformation of harbour quays, as in Dún Laoghaire Baths, Dublin, Jubilee Pool, Penzance, or Barcelona, Hamburg, and Tallinn harbours, inspired architects to use sculptures, stairways, pavements, or urban lighting to enhance the safety and attractiveness of these urban spaces.

The second approach applies to beach and dune systems experiencing a decline in biodiversity, partially because of diminishing habitats. Cities used nature-based solutions along sandy beaches, including wave-damping extensions or dune grass near residential areas in Porto do Son, El Prat de Llobregat, Rimini, and Delfzijl. On the other hand, cities and ports that expel the motorised traffic further to the hinterland (Porto do Son) or reclaim land from the sea (Rotterdam) use that space for various social and cultural activities while providing a buffer for the urban fabric from the negative impact of the extreme weather and rough seas.

This year's European Prize for Urban Public Space showed that climate change is a significant threat but also an inspiration for cities to come up with a range of solutions to mitigate and adapt to new conditions, improve the quality, and broaden the offer of uses and designs for public space, making the cities safer, more resilient and attractive for all their residents and visitors. Since urban areas will continue to face escalating climate threats, the strategies and experiences gained this year offer hope and practical guidance for building more resilient, adaptive European urban environments.

Climate change – An inspiration for resilient public space design
Žaklina Gligorijević

Urban public space is shared accessible space that organises and offers outdoor life to citizens. In urban environments where, to an increasing degree, development is a result of private economic interest, the importance of public space is unquestionable because it serves social needs ranging from regulated requirements pertaining to accessibility, diversity, and safety through to non-quantifiable necessities related with identity, beauty, and value. What characterises public space as a design task is the need to achieve coherent solutions. The challenge of designing urban public space, then, is to avoid going about it in such a way that it results in barren areas that undermine the original intentions.

The challenges of urban public space today are more complex than they were in the past. Conditions on earth are changing as a result of excessive consumption and ignorant exploitation of its resources, which have given rise to large demographic shifts, and a climate that is becoming more extreme. Temperatures are rising and rainfall is heavier than it used to be. For urban public space, issues related to safety and comfort that were once important are now becoming urgent. Shared outdoor areas must not only be functional and offer inviting, inclusive meeting places as well as recreational environments to all people. They must also contribute to the ways in which societies are managing critical socioeconomic problems and a harsher climate.

The role of architects and landscape architects in this situation is to shape materials in the form of answers to needs. Design must make sense. It does so by addressing and responding intelligently to current challenges, for example by presenting solutions for reintegration of post-industrial sites, ecological restoration, stormwater management, and recycling historical ruins. In order to be relevant and produce appropriate projects, architects and landscape architects must have an awareness and sense of responsibility that goes far beyond each specific commission.

We must consider issues that concern not only the client, the users, the builder, and the local context of a project. In our practice, we need to assess and control the global impact of our work. For instance, the leap in scale from grappling with the level of translucency of a sheltering urban roof to its impact on the density of the ozone layer in the stratosphere, is enormous. To be able to engage with problems of such a scale we need new knowledge, revised working methods, and transdisciplinary collaboration. There is no reason to doubt the architect's and the landscape architect's ability to address and contribute to solutions of contemporary challenges. We have long experience in holistic thinking and innovation has always been on our agenda. However, if our work is to be excellent, we must do more: our contribution must speak to people's feelings, and our projects must transcend the realm of intellect to produce emotional and sensory meaning.

By identifying, understanding, putting to use, and making visible each place's immanent narrative and form-making potential, we will be able to create public space that not only serves society, but also cities themselves. It can do this by bringing out qualities that are not prioritised in much of today's urban development. Among the winning and shortlisted entries of the two categories of the twelfth award of the European Prize for Urban Public Space there are impressive examples of such achievements: unprecedented transformations resulting in spaces that offer an extraordinary scale, an evocative architectural character, and hitherto unknown civic potential; careful and innovative constructions of discarded material to produce environments where memory and meaning are merged in transformed matter; and superb interventions in urban landscapes that restore the identities of both people and places.

Hence, to continue to contribute with our practice, we need not only to gain new expertise and working strategies, but it is also crucial that we maintain and develop our artistic, aesthetic, and poetic skills. Despite the urgent challenges of the global situation architecture and landscape architecture cannot be reduced to purely technical disciplines because—to argue with a quote from Nobel laureate, Norwegian writer Sigrid Undset—"For mores and manners are always changing as time passes, and people's beliefs change and the way they think about many things. But people's hearts do not change: they remain the same through all the days, forever."

Public space is constantly under threat. Plaça dels Àngels is in the news at the moment because part of the square has been rezoned by the Barcelona City Council to allow expansion of the Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona (MACBA). Construction of this extension of the CCCB's neighbour, designed by the Swiss studio Christ & Gantenbein together with Barcelona-based H Arquitectes, is scheduled to begin in January 2025, despite protest from local residents and two unresolved legal appeals.

"The problem is not the architecture, but the land on which it will sit", wrote Rafael Gómez-Moriana in *The Architectural Review*. El Raval, as one of Europe's most densely populated neigh-bourhoods, with more than 43,000 inhabitants per square kilometre, cannot afford to lose 908 m^2 of much-needed public space. On its website, the museum claims the institution will become "more accessible and open", and work on Plaça dels Àngels will turn it into a "livelier square" and "friendlier environment". The MACBA also promises 349 m^2 of roof terrace that will be acces-sible to the public during its opening hours.

Space that is genuinely public does not have any specific purpose and is certainly not governed by opening hours. Its publicness lies in its malleability, the multiple ways in which it can be appropriated by different kinds of people at different hours of day and night, and during all the months and seasons of the year. As a stage where human life is played out, a place of democracy and collectivity, public space is a crucial communal resource. Although its abundance, openness and accessibility are crucial to the civic health of cities and shared landscapes, political and commercial forces are increasingly encroaching on it. "Through the appropriation of public spaces and resources into the logic of the marketplace, individuals are dispossessed of many collective forms of mutual support or sharing", Jonathan Crary argues in his piercing critique *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep*.

It was back in the early 1990s that Mike Davis and Michael Sorkin predicted the death of public space as we knew it. Their observations were based on US cities, Los Angeles and New York in particular, but their thinking transfers seamlessly to Europe. Warning of the plague of "sinister and homogenous design", Sorkin argued that this (at the time) new urbanism is not as benign as it might first seem. Indeed, more perversely, it is "structured to achieve maximum control" and purges the "idea of authentic interaction among citizens".

Strategies of control and surveillance translated into new forms or architecture and urban spaces have since proliferated in a range of forms: privately owned public spaces, referred to as POPs, often with their own security patrols; the new typology of 'malls without walls', as these developments prioritise retail and leisure; the installation of numerous cameras, justified as security measures; benches designed so that people cannot lie down on them; the introduction of spikes on flat surfaces to prevent people from sitting, sleeping, or sliding on them.

These devices do not necessarily make the city safer. In fact, they create a hostile environment. Commodification of public spaces results in cities that are designed purely for consumption and regimented entertainment. Limits and order take precedence over matters of comfort, while certain population groups—homeless people for example—and types of behaviour that are perceived as noxious or threatening are adamantly unwelcome.

In this situation, the CCCB's European Prize for Urban Public Space plays a vital role. Launched in 2000, at a time when Davis and Sorkin started to be proven right, the Prize defends and celebrates the creation, rescue, mainte-nance, and improvement of urban public space in Europe. In its 25 years of existence, the Prize has generated an archive of projects and series of publications that track the evolution of trends, policies, and discourse. Although the right to the city has been eroded, the Prize highlights the ways

in which public space can contribute to more social and climate justice across Europe.

Reviewing and discussing entries during the different stages of this year's judging process led us to return to the essence of what public space is and for whom it exists. Entries presenting public space in disguise, where people would be required to order a beverage or purchase an entry ticket for example, were the first to be eliminated. Public space must be universally accessible and, therefore, completely free. Projects whose primary purpose was to attract visitors, or be a destination in themselves, were also discarded.

Public space is perhaps best defined by negatives: it is not private, it does not cost anything, and it is not limited to a particular purpose or type of user. On the contrary, a good public space is a setting for everyday life, a place where people want to spend time, where they would feel encouraged to linger, and where they will want to return.

The most convincing projects were those—in Porto do Son, Warsaw, Charleroi, Monte, Tbilisi, Reus, Dublin, Rimini, Delfzijl and Palamós—that felt open-ended rather than overly prescriptive, leaving room for people to imagine scenarios, make adjustments, and leave their mark. There might even be possibilities for misuse and misappropriation. While it was useful to hear finalists present their projects, the publicness of space only begins once designers have walked away. (This Prize is, like many architecture awards, judged based on visuals rather than visits to the projects.)

This lack of predictability and absence of specific purpose is the essence of public space, but it is also what in turn constitutes—to some—a threat. Places conducive to idleness, where subjects are not required to be efficient, productive, or useful, are a form of resistance to the capitalist project as well as an invitation to challenge the monolithic 'public' and imagine new forms of togetherness. Using, occupying, and simply *being* can become a gesture of defiance and solidarity.

New forms of togetherness
Manon Mollard

Public space has long been recognised as a critical element for social life, economic and commercial development, and cultural expression in cities around the world. Today, is taking on yet another crucial role: serving as a potential frontline for climate adaptation. From waterfront promenades to green corridors, urban spaces have the potential to enhance daily life and mitigate the adverse impacts of climate-related challenges. This synergy is most evident in coastal cities and areas featuring major waterscapes, where public spaces can function as specific buffers against flooding, extreme heat, and storm surges. A comprehensive, integrated approach to urban design, embracing public space as a multifunctional asset, is instrumental in empowering communities to prepare for, environmental uncertainties.

Beyond mitigation of flood risk, strategic design of urban public spaces can assist cities in coping with extreme heat. In coastal cities, reflection of sunlight off large bodies of water can exacerbate the heat in surrounding districts, rendering the urban environment uncomfortable and, at times, hazardous for vulnerable populations. An effective adaptation strategy is to integrate ample greenery, such as urban forests, green roofs, and parks, into the public realm. Green infrastructures, when designed and integrated effectively with the built environment, provide numerous benefits. These include offering shade, lowering ambient temperatures through evapotranspiration, and creating microclimates that are cooler and more pleasant when complemented by water features such as fountains, ponds, or misting stations.

Strategic design of green infrastructures, when implemented in an urban context, has the potential to enhance the liveability of cities, particularly in the face of rising temperatures.

A close examination of the projects nominated for the 2024 European Prize for Urban Public Space, reveals a growing emphasis on adaptation issues. This emphasis is characterised by adoption of ecosystem-based design approaches and integration of techniques and tools aimed at mitigating the impact of extreme climate events through strategic design of the land-sea interface within public spaces.

The Beach Boulevard project, for instance, serves to revive the connection between Delfzijl's town centre and the Wadden Sea, creating a dynamic public space that integrates infrastructural advancements with ecological restoration. This initiative exemplifies the employment of built environment interventions to tackle both technical and socio-economic challenges. Integration of engineered solutions for water-level management with the architectural design of a functional and inviting public space underscores the capacity of urban design to foster resilience while enhancing community well-being. In contrast, the redevelopment of the harbour edge in Porto do Son underscores the significance of land-sea safeguarding and restoring natural systems in the face of urbanisation and counteracting local impacts of global change through a novel coastal interface designresulting in a design that is both responsive to urban texture regeneration and coastal protection.

In coastal areas, rising sea levels and intensifying hurricanes or typhoons can cause destructive storm surges, putting residents and infrastructure at risk. elevated boardwalks, protective berms, and floodable parks help to absorb and divert excess water during storms, reducing the burden on traditional engineered systems. For example, instead of relying solely on concrete seawalls, some cities are experimenting with "living shorelines" that use natural features to absorb wave energy. These living shorelines, when integrated into public spaces such as waterfront parks, offer dual benefits: recreational opportunities and ecological benefits. A climate-proof design approach, therefore, not only reduces the immediate risk of flooding in urban cores but also offers new opportunities for people to connect with the water, whether through walking trails, seating areas, or interactive water features.

Nature-based solutions (NBS) are defined as the simultaneous implementation of multiple functions which aim to produce positive effects on the environment, society, and culture. However, the adverse effects of climate change on the quality of life of settled communities can be of such magnitude as to render adaptation by ecosystems impossible and thus cause them to degrade to such an extent that the effectiveness of NBS in supporting climate change adaptation and environmental risk reduction is significantly reduced.

The project of beach improvement in the Coastal Walk in Palamós is an example of a land-sea interface where (NBS) have been integrated into advanced schemes managing land-sea interface, By thoughtfully extending the urban experience into an unspoiled landscape, the project illustrates the potential of design strategies that enhance nature's processes to balance human activity with ecological preservation, fostering the long-term resilience of natural assets.

Moreover, strategic urban design along waterscapes also opens opportunities for economic growth and innovation, which in turn can fund further climate adaptation measures. By thoughtfully blending commercial development with green infrastructure and open spaces, municipalities can attract businesses and visitors while maintaining or restoring ecological function.

A prime example of this integration can be found in The Sea Park in Rimini, this project has transformed a fragmented seafront into a cohesive urban park, integrating the vibrancy of the city with a green space that serves both tourists and residents. Notably, the project addresses the challenges posed by climate change by creating a public space that balances functionality for residents with appeal for visitors. Concurrently, it establishes a substantial ecological infrastructure, thereby playing a pivotal role in protecting the city from rising sea levels and improving resilience to extreme climatic events. The design of the park reflects the cultural identity of the local area and delivers a dynamic experience that harmoniously incorporates natural elements, sports facilities, and recreational areas. This approach fosters a symbiotic relationship between the metropolis and its coastal landscape, positioning the park as a paradigm for sustainable and multifunctional public spaces.

It is evident that the role of public space in climate adaptation, especially in the context of coastal cities and waterscapes, cannot be overstated. Public spaces have the capacity to serve as living laboratories for innovative design, social cohesion, and ecological resilience. When public plazas and corridors are lined with shade trees, permeable pavements, and water features, they become areas to counteract urban heat islands phenomena. It is therefore vital that these spaces are managed collaboratively and adapted over time, as this will turn them into enduring, community-rooted assets capable of meeting the evolving challenges of a changing climate. It is imperative for city planners, architects, policymakers, and communities to recognise public space as an integral component of urban resilience strategies, rather than perceiving it as a luxury.

Through collaborative management and adaptive adaptation, these stakeholders can shape coastal and waterside environments where both people and ecosystems can not only survive, but also thrive, in the face of global change.

Market Square and Lamme
River Garden
Bad Salzdetfurth Germany

Green Axes and Squares
in The Eixample
Barcelona Spain

Horta Provisional Market:
A Two-Stage Project
Barcelona Spain

Bench Invasion
Bruges Belgium

Brigittines Park
Brussels Belgium

Space for Solidarity. A Pilot
Project
Bucharest Romania

Centre for Building with Earth –
Oracles Park
Dobrava pri Škocjanu Slovenia

Bridgefoot Street Park
Dublin Ireland

Bijgaardepark Extension
Gent Belgium

AIRE (Pavilion of the TAC! Urban
Architecture Festival 2022)
Granada Spain

City Lake
Horn Austria

"Aphrodite" Cultural /
Environmental Route
Inia Cyprus

Route of the Ribeira
Loures Portugal

Reclamation of former slaughter-
house area as an extension
of Plato gallery
Ostrava Czech Republic

Eyes of Prague
Prague Czech Republic

Les Promenades
Reims France

A Walk on the Rooftops
Rotterdam The Netherlands

Covering the Remains of the
Church of St John the Baptist
at the Žiče Charterhouse
Stare Slemene Eslovenia

Conversion of the Central
Market Square
Tienen Belgium

Rijnvliet Edible Neighborhood
Utrecht The Netherlands

Selected
Works

Bad Salzdetfurth Germany
Market Square and Lamme River Garden

Transformation of the Market Square into an open space highlighting the town's timber-framed heritage with simple design and locally crafted benches.

Author
POLA Landschafts-architekten

Developer
Bad Salzdetfurth City Council

2023
Surface area 4,600 m²

112

Barcelona Spain
Green Axes and Squares in The Eixample

Authors
Various authors

Oficina Superilla, Clara Solà-Morales studio SLP, Metronom Arquitectura (Albert Casas & Frederic Villagrasa), UTE Under Project Lab, SCP (Anna Gutiérrez Merin & Álvaro Cuéllar) - BOPBA Arquitectura, SLP (Iñaki Baquero & Iñigo Azpiazu), UTE LANDLAB Laboratorio de Paisajes. SLP + GPO Ingeniería y Arquitectura, S.L.U, 08014 (Adrià Guardiet, Sandra Torres), UTE ESTEYCO, SA + Estudi Martí Franch Arquitectura del Paisatge SL + NABLABCN Studio SCP, Agence TER Landscape Architects + GPO Ingeniería y Arquitectura + Ana Coello Paisatge i Arquitectura, Fabric Office SCCLP, Gonzalez Cavia y Cabrera Arquitectura Urbanismo y Paisaje, SL, UTE B67 Palomeras Arquitectes, SLP – Cierto Estudio, SCCLP

The projects implement the Green Axes Model by focusing on pedestrian-friendly design, environmental infrastructure and the creation of green urban spaces.

Developers
Barcelona City Council. Gerència de l'Arquitecte en Cap / BIMSA

2023
Surface area 111,733 m²

113

Barcelona Spain
Horta Provisional Market:
A Two-Stage Project

Temporary transformation of a market into a future public space with a wooden structure that will eventually serve as a shaded pergola for the neighbourhood.

Authors
Carles Enrich Studio, Ravetllat arquitectura (Pere Joan Ravetllat)

Developer
Institut de Mercats Municipals de Barcelona (IMMB)

2023
Surface area 3,600 m²

114

Bruges Belgium
Bench Invasion

Performance that involves participants carrying benches through public spaces, inviting people to sit and connect, ending with a communal gathering and toast.

Author
Compagnie krak

Developer
Els Degryse, Dieter Missiaen

2023
Surface area 1,000 m²

115

Brussels Belgium
Brigittines Park

Urban space with a focus on sustainability and play, featuring a public workshop and innovative uses of reused materials and permeable surfaces.

Author

générale

Developer

Brussels City Council

2023
Surface area 13,071 m²

116

Bucharest Romania
Space for Solidarity. A Pilot Project

The modular off-grid infrastructure features covered storage units and versatile street furniture, serving as a pilot project for a flexible, reusable urban space solution for vulnerable social groups.

Authors and developers

Atelier Ad Hoc Arhitectură, Comunitate

2023
Surface area 25 m²

117

Dobrava pri Škocjanu
Slovenia
Centre for Building
with Earth – Oracles Park

Dublin Ireland
Bridgefoot Street Park

Two pavilions—a rammed-earth corner pavilion from 2022 and a modular extension from 2023—demonstrate innovative approaches to sustainable construction and land use.

Transformation of Dublin's waste to create a park, showcasing a new aesthetic that uses repurposed materials and diverts significant quantities of waste from landfills.

Author
Z.O.P. - Institute for Spatial Design

Developer
Z.O.P.

2023
Surface area 1,600 m²

118

Authors
DFLA

Developer
Dublin City Council

2022
Surface area 10,000 m²

119

Gent Belgium
Bijgaardepark Extension

Authors

**Greenspot, VK architects +
engineers, &bogdan
architects, LAND
landschapsarchitecten,
NEY & Partners**

Developer

sogent

The 2,000 m² park connects a cohousing project
to a public park, highlighting preserved ROA
graffiti, fern-themed seating, green climbing vines
and a basement for a rare bat colony.

2023
Surface area 2,000 m²

120

Granada Spain
AIRE (Pavilion of the TAC! Urban Architecture Festival 2022)

Author

**P + S Estudio de Arqui-
tectura (Francisco Parada +
Laura R. Salvador)**

Developer

**MITMA (Ministerio de
Transportes, Movilidad y
Agenda Urbana de España),
Fundación Arquia**

The pavilion uses rental scaffolding, natural jute
fabric and local riprap to create a sustainable,
ephemeral structure embodying circular economy
principles and regional craftsmanship.

2022
Surface area 2,775 m²

121

Horn Austria
City Lake

Redesigning of the lake for free public access with wooden decks for recreation and events, enhancing the district with green infrastructure and climate-friendly amenities.

Author
YEWO LANDSCAPES

Developer
Horn City Council

2022
Surface area 31,340 m²

122

Inia Cyprus
"Aphrodite" Cultural/Environmental Route

Improvement of the road by preserving dry-stone walls, restoring chapels and adding a visitors' centre, nature observation deck and rest areas along its layout.

Authors
Architectural Studio Agisilaou & Kalavas

Developer
Paphos District Administration

2023
Surface area 12,000 m²

123

Loures Portugal
Route of the Ribeira

Author
Topiaris, Landscape Architecture

Developers
Loures City Council, FTD Consultores de Engenharia, Lda., JETSJ - Geotecnia, Lda., PMT - Engenharia e Consultoria, Lda.

The 6.1 km wooden walkway features stilts, photovoltaic lighting and bridges, offering habitat observation, flood protection and recreational opportunities.

2023
Surface area 450 m²

124

Ostrava Czech Republic
Reclamation of former slaughterhouse area as an extension of Plato gallery

Transformation of the outdoor space into a biodiverse park and permaculture garden, preserving its wild nature and ensuring an open, inclusive and environmentally-conscious design.

Author
KWK Promes Robert Konieczny

Developer
Ostrava City Council

2023
Surface area 9,000 m²

125

Prague Czech Republic
Eyes of Prague

The 4 km riverfront project revitalizes 20 vaults as public spaces, combining modern design with historical architecture and unique access features.

Author
Petr Janda
Developer
Prague City Council

2023
Surface area 80,000 m²

126

Reims France
Les Promenades

Transformation of the urban environment into woodland, creating a series of interconnected spaces with clearings and forest edges, enhancing historical monuments and introducing water features.

Author
TPFI, OGI, Les éclaireurs, Encore heureux, Osty et associés
Developers
Reims City Council

2022
Surface area 137,500 m²

127

Rotterdam The Netherlands
A Walk on the Rooftops

Authors

Dutch Steigers, LOLA Landscape Architects, MVRDV, Rotterdam Rooftop Days

Developer

Rotterdam Rooftop Days

A 600-metre elevated trail that offers a unique city perspective and showcases exhibitions about using rooftops for greenery, water storage and food production.

2022
Surface area 1,500 m²

128

Stare Slemene Slovenia
Covering the Remains of the Church of St John the Baptist at the Žiče Charterhouse

Authors

MEDPROSTOR (Rok Žnidaršič, Jerneja Fischer Knap, Samo Mlakar, Katja Ivić, Dino Mujić)

Developer

TIC Slovenske Konjice

Renovation of the church that combines advanced technology with the careful preservation of historical artifacts and the building's heritage.

2022
Surface area 355 m²

129

Tienen Belgium
Conversion of the Central
Market Square

The square designed as a series of interconnected "rooms" built of reused stone, creating a large "church garden" with native plants and trees.

Authors
ARA, Atelier Ruimtelijk Advies, Plant & Houtgoed, BAS bvba, 51N4E

Developer
Tienen City Council

2022
Surface area 18,250 m²

130

Utrecht The Netherlands
Rijnvliet Edible Neighborhood

A 15-hectare food forest park with seven plant layers, including a treetop walk and various recreational spaces, supports biodiversity, ecosystem services and community engagement.

Author
Felixx Landscape Architects & Planners

Developer
Utrecht City Council

2023
Surface area 150,000 m²

131

Jury

Beth Galí (President). Barcelona (Spain). Urban architect and landscape and industrial designer. Cofounder of the Barcelona-based BB+GG landscaping and urban architecture studio, she has taught in the Urban Planning Laboratory of the Barcelona School of Architecture and has been guest lecturer at the universities of Lausanne, Delft and Harvard. She was president of FAD (Fostering Arts and Design), Barcelona, from 2001 to 2009.

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Beate Marie Hølmebakk. Oslo (Norway). Architect. Professor at the Institute of Architecture, Beate Marie Hølmebakk is responsible for studio TAP – The Architectural Project which runs two master's courses in building design: Building in Landscape and Building in Life. Co-founder of Manthey Kula, an architectural office working in the areas of architecture, landscape architecture, and art.

Manon Mollard. London (UK). Architect, writer and editor of *The Architectural Review*. Beyond the AR, is a guest critic at architecture schools and has recently collaborated with institutions such as the Royal Institute of British Architects, the Trienal de Lisboa, the Canadian Centre for Architecture, and the Schweizerisches Architekturmuseum in Basel.

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Board of experts

Petros Babasikas. Greece. Architect and Director of HBA Architectural Studies at the John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design, University of Toronto. His field is production of architecture and public space versus the climate crisis.

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Luisa Bravo. Italy. Academic and activist with five years' experience as an urban planner and designer focusing on public space. Founder of the non-profit City Space Architecture, and founder and editor-in-chief of *The Journal of Public Space*.

Konrad Buhagiar. Malta. Executive director of AP and chief editor of AP's *A Printed Thing* and *Founding Myths of Architecture* publications. He has been Chairman of the Heritage Advisory Committee and the Valletta Rehabilitation Committee.

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Rodrigo Coelho. Portugal. Associate Professor at the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Porto. Working as an architect, both independently and in co-authorship, he has participated in several public competitions with prize-winning projects.

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Sofie de Caigny. Belgium. Director of the Flanders Architecture Institute, editor-in-chief of *Flanders Architectural Review* (2018-2024), and former Secretary General of ICAM – International Confederation of Architectural Museums.

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Míriam García. Spain. Architect and landscape designer. Director of LANDLAB. Lecturer in the Department of Urbanism, Territory and Landscape at the UPC (Barcelona). Member of the European Scientific Committee.

Christina Gräwe. Germany. Curator and journalist. Teacher at the Institute for Architectural History, TU Berlin (2007). Co-editor of *The German Architectural Annual*, and organiser of DAM Preis. Chairwoman of architekturbild e.v. Partner of kuratorenwerkstatt Förster Gräwe.

Petra Griefing. Belgium. Former director for 20 years of Stad en Architectuur, a Leuven-based association which promotes architecture, she worked as an architect in studios in Rotterdam and Maastricht.

Tinatin Gurgenidze. Georgia. Architect and urban designer, researcher, and curator in the field of critical urban issues. Co-founder of the Tbilisi Architecture Biennial.

Maarja Gustavson. Estonia. Landscape architect. Co-founder and partner at studio POLKA. Guest lecturer in the subjects of landscape design, architecture, and maintenance. President of the Estonian Association of Landscape Architects.

Valeri Gyurov. Bulgaria. Urban designer, architect and curator. Founder of GIFTED_Sofia, a culture hub offering books, music, clothes, and exhibition space. He was director of URBANIK, and co-founder of Transformatori and Smart Fab Lab.

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Juulia Kauste. Finland. Architecture advisor. With a background in sociology, urban studies, and history of architecture, she was director of the Finnish Cultural Institute in New York and the Museum of Finnish Architecture in Helsinki.

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Rūta Leitanaitė. Lithuania. Editor and board member of the digital platform A10 New European Architecture Cooperative. President of the Architects Association of Lithuania (AAL). Founder of the radio programme "An Architect Is Required" at Ziniu Radijas.

Piotr Lewitski. Poland. Co-owner of the studio Biuro Projektów Lewicki Łatak, winner of numerous awards and distinctions, including the most prominent architectural awards in Poland.

Charlotte Malterre-Barthes. France. Architect, urban designer, and Assistant Professor at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology—EPFL where she leads the laboratory RIOT. Assistant Professor at Harvard University.

Katharina Matzig. Germany. Architect and architecture journalist. Online-editor for www.baunetz.de in Berlin and, since 1997, referent for baukultur-education at Bavarian Chamber of Architects.

Mateja Medvedič. Slovenia. Architect, art critic, curator, and art. Co-editor of the architecture magazine *Oris*, contributor to the magazine Ambient, and architecture editor of the webzine *Sloveniana* from *thezaurus.com.*

Laida Memba. Spain. Researcher and lecturer. Member of the GAMUC research group which studies architecture and urban planning in Spain's former colonies in Africa, and co-director of Guinea Heritage.

Dan Merta. Czech Republic. Director of the Jaroslav Fragner Gallery, the leading Czech platform for contemporary architecture. Head of artistic curatorship of the Artscape Norway project.

Consortium of the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (CCCB)

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European Prize for Urban Public Space 2024

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public space

This book presents the winner, the finalists and the selected works from the general category and the special Seafronts category of the 2024 edition of the European Prize for Urban Public Space, together with a collection of reflections and thoughts from the jury.

The European Prize for Urban Public Space is a biennial award organised by the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (CCCB). Since 2000, it has recognised the best projects in the creation, transformation and recovery of public spaces, which are seen as clear indicators of the democratic health of European cities.

Between the two categories of the 2024 edition, a total of 297 works from 35 different countries have been submitted. The prize has thus become a window offering a privileged perspective on the transformation of public spaces in Europe and a gauge of the main concerns of European cities.

With contributions from Beth Galí, Sonia Curnier, Fabrizio Gallanti, Žaklina Gligorijević, Beate Hølmebakk, Manon Mollard and Francesco Musco.

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