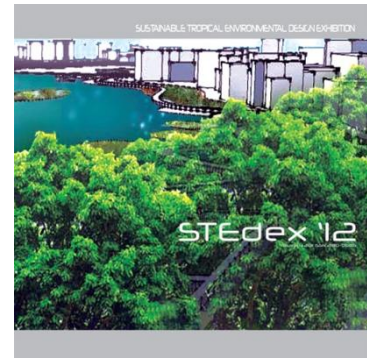


Jury Review: Recreational and Creative Centre

Sustainable Tropical Environmental Design Exhibition 2012

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STEdex'12 – Faridah Adnan, ***Recreational and Creative Centre, Sustainable Tropical Environmental Design Exhibition 2012***, ISSN : 2180-0685, Vol : 4, [159], Faculty of Design and Architecture, Universiti Putra Malaysia

At first glance it would seem appropriate to take cues from paintings by renowned artists for a recreational and creative centre. The students elaborately explained their design approach through much writing, and somewhat less sketches. But how does a 2-dimensional art translate into a 3-dimensional architecture? It could be too literal a translation. Compare this with the 3-dimensional shard metaphor adopted by Daniel Libeskin at the Imperial War Museum North in Manchester. The IWMN was fundamentally based on the globe of the world where areas of wars and conflicts were mapped out. These traces of history, in the form of shards, were in turn assembled on the site and projected into the building. One of the objectives of the task was to expose students to a community based project. Here one was presented with a dichotomy: Should the building be designed for the community first or should art be the priority? Quite a number of the proposals were manifested in sculptural forms. Was a sculptural form suitable for the community or would a low key and unassuming edifice be more suitable? The building was trying to be the art or sculpture, a thing to look at, a sight to behold, rather than being there FOR the community.

If a building was designed for the arts, did it have to be artistic? Would it be better if it were to be subdued and merely act as a backdrop to the works of art produced within? But a bland box would not do it. The building itself still had to be inspirational. Then again, perhaps in a community like Kota Kemuning, all these would be acceptable. Several of the proposals that were earlier described as being sculptural were curvilinear in shape. Curvilinear forms had their own language and there was a certain method of employing them in architectural design. In the students' works most of the curved walls were appropriately used. When employed in a large and tall space they created a dramatic sensation as the curvature of the walls could be fully seen and experienced. The sweeping curves could even be described as sexy. Interior images were in abundance to indicate the spatial quality of these spaces. Furniture layout on the floor plans showed how well the spaces would function. Generally the drawings were well presented, and together with well executed models, they did justice to the design. But curves should not be used indiscriminately for just any space. The main gallery should have flat vertical walls to display flat art canvases. It does not make economic sense to use curves for small, cellular spaces where the sensation of the space would not be fully

appreciated. Unless the design was for a resort or a prime park facility, toilets should simply be rectilinear for ease of services installation. Art shops and store rooms that required straight runs of shelves would work better if rectilinear. It was equally painful to see M&E rooms and lift shafts in curvilinear shapes.

Aside from the few negative comments, overall, the project was carried through successfully. The buildings related positively with the site. The massing was generally modern and yet they responded well to our equatorial climate. Thus it could be surmised that students achieved the main objectives of the project which were: To expose students to a community based project; to develop design concepts and approach with appropriate vocabularies; and to reinforce systematic design process in producing design proposal.