

## Urban Revolution – Jury Review

Sustainable Tropical Environmental Design Exhibition 2011

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The most notable strength of this year's artefacts is the high quality of conceptual ideas and the manner they are being translated into design through challenging projects. For example, in the Dark Side of the Moon Pavilion project, the design task is to challenge the student's creativity based on something which is unreal and controlled by the unconscious mind. Here, the adequacy of the psychoanalysis of a designer's thought is clearly conveyed by the selected scheme whilst the strong forms and colours set the mood in its design expression. The CESTA project is another big challenge to the students in terms of understanding the bio-process and transforming the main issues to a built environment. Here, the architectural simulation or morphogenesis process of integrative cell is fast becoming a new trend in architecture despite the widespread critics that consider the approach as bearing too much emphasis on the form. However, the selected students' projects revolutionize the more environmentally adaptive modular technology that is flexible and requires less maintenance. They have utilized the multiple cells in different shapes and configurations to enhance the spatial quality in an open plan, which are the next hot items in design.

Meanwhile, Municipal Transients Tenement (MTT) projects call for critical responses from the students on understanding project brief and new building typology. Design is a response to a problem, and for it to be replicable, there has to be more than just drawings but a rationale. In this case, the architectural spaces are not clearly defined, which lifted an enormous constraint on the building forms and they are free to go any which way. Of all the schemes presented the two selected explained what they were trying to do and served as model for others; it is liveable as a temporary urban camping sites and has lessons that can be applied anywhere. The building with no enclosure walls and with high emphasis on the environmental factors plays an important role in enhancing urban camping experience in Penang. The selected design takes more of the human factors into account and provides a less sterile environment that would be more acceptable (not just hypothetically replicable) across more cultures.

The glaring weakness of the group's proposal is the poor quality of the spaces that is being experienced. There is too much emphasis on the form making that it is felt the manner on how the spaces are experienced are not given enough thoughts and the forms are overempowering the whole scheme. Whilst the open planning is expected in using modular building envelopes, it is also important to ensure that the urban fabrics are integrated in the design. Parallel to this, more investigations on the urban features—social and the environmental aspects should be given more attention when dealing in design of public spaces. An urban project without an urban intervention and context does not have the soul that users can identify with; i.e.the sense of belonging to the particular urban spaces.