

10th OISTAT Theatre Architecture Competition 2017 Competition Brief

Introduction

The OISTAT Theatre Architecture Competition is an international ideas competition, aimed at students and emerging architecture practitioners, and is organised by the Architecture Commission of OISTAT (International Organisation of Scenographers, Theatre Architects and Technicians). The 10th Theatre Architecture Competition 2017 is generously supported by the Hsinchu City government of Taiwan, including the international symposium, jury meeting and exhibition in Hsinchu City in May 2017, and will then be shown at World Stage Design 2017 at Taipei National University of the Arts from 1-9 July 2017, where selected entries will be exhibited and the cash prizes awarded. World Stage Design is a major international theatre design exhibit and event, which takes place every four years under the auspices of OISTAT. The entry fee for the competition is €50 per entry and prize money will be awarded to winning entries in accordance with clause 4.1 below

Competition Theme - Theatre as Public Space

Taiwan is currently constructing several major new performing arts centres, with multiple auditoria, designed by significant international architects, which will be completed in 2017. The aim of the competition is to challenge the conventional typology of the theatre and will be focusing on the design of a temporary theatre (or theatres) in The Public Activity Center, a disused sports stadium in Hsinchu City in Taiwan.

The Site

The story behind Hsinchu Public Activity Center can be traced back to the Hsinchu City Government's establishment of a public square North of its location. The public square gradually lost its functionality and the government then constructed a new indoor sports center nearby, on Wuchang Street. In its early days this indoor sports center attracted many for playing basketball and volleyball and was also a popular venue for recreational activities in the neighborhood. Unfortunately, over time, people found the sports center no longer served their needs due to its poor facilities and equipment. As a result, the government removed the original roof and turned the sports center into a parking lot, which became The Hsinchu Public Activity Center. Today, the site is used for public events, such as political rallies or athletics competitions. Having lost its original use and fallen into disrepair the site is now seeking a new use for this once vibrant area.

Hsinchu City

Hsinchu City is a town with a colorful history. It is commonly known as the "windy city" because of its famous gusts. Hsinchu is the technology center of Taiwan. From a geographical standpoint, Hsinchu is situated in a favorable location: the driving distance to Taipei is around 1 hour, Taoyuan International airport is a 40-minute drive; and to the south, the city of Taichung is an hour away. Neighboring the Hsinchu Science Park (HSP) are two of Taiwan's top higher education institutions, National Tsing Hua University and National Chiao Tung University. Hsinchu has a charming quality that can be best described as "old meets new," a good blend of rural and urban culture. Many ancient buildings and artifacts remain intact in the city. In the center of the city lies the "Heart of Hsinchu", the ancient East Gate and the famous City God Temple (Cheng Huang Miao), where some of the best local delicacies are available. Hsinchu is not a large city, highly developed yet still carrying the special characteristics of a small-town. This fascinating city has a lot to look forward to in the future.

Climate

Hsinchu's climate is humid subtropical. The city is located in a part of the island that has a rainy season that lasts from February to September, with the heaviest rain in late April through August, during the south-west monsoon. The city experiences hot humid weather from June until September, while October to December are arguably the most pleasant times of year. Hsinchu is affected by strong easterly winds off the East China Sea. Natural hazards such as typhoons and earthquakes are common in the region.

The Brief

A conventional theatre is exemplified as a piece of civic architecture. It is perceived as an important public facility and a source of civic pride, but it is also a controversial typology. When the performance begins, the theatre closes its doors to its surroundings and is shut off from the urban environment. At the same time, the contemporary problem of the theatre is that the increasing technical sophistication of the performance space leads to ever increasing construction and production costs with consequently high ticket prices, leading to the exclusion of many audiences and artists. As a result many theatre groups are using existing non-theatre buildings and public spaces to present their performances and the notion of the permanent theatre is starting to be challenged. The purpose of the competition is to imagine how a different kind of temporary theatre environment could be

created, which like theatre itself is ephemeral and is 'here today and gone tomorrow'.

Shaped by an existing urban context, the challenge of the theatre design competition is not only to concentrate on the performance space(s) themselves, but to think how the theatre can engage with civic activities. Competitors are asked to conceive a temporary 'Theatre Village', which can be erected for a short festival of theatre, providing for both conventional performances or something more experimental and which explores the relationship between the performance itself and the public space which it inhabits. A place to participate in the telling of stories, to meet people, to eat and drink and to celebrate a shared experience.

The Design Tasks

The proposed Theatre Village will provide a temporary setting for an international festival of theatre, providing a range of performance spaces, including closed spaces and open platforms, allowing several performances to take place at once. The design will be constructed using simple low cost materials and be capable of being demounted and used in another place. The climate in Hsinchu suggests that some kind of temporary or permanent roof canopy should be created to shelter performers and audiences from the sun and rain.

The design will encourage the opening up of the process of presenting theatre and the telling of stories as a part of our day-to-day life. These settings can often provide a unique atmosphere, which resonates with a particular production or style of presentation, in a way which may not be possible in a conventional theatre.

Collaborations between architects and other theatre practitioners such as directors, designers, technicians, actors, dancers, musicians, or students of those fields will be welcomed.

This is an ideas competition and there is no intention to build the winning entry but prize winners will have the opportunity to visit and participate in the conference and exhibition in Hsinchu City and the World Stage Design event in Taipei City.

The following drawings, photographs and information on the site are provided and can be downloaded with the brief from the OISTAT website:

City Plan (.dwg)

CAD Plans and Sections (.dwg)

Site photos

Site information sheet

Special Considerations

Successful performance spaces have some very particular requirements, which you are expected to understand and explore in order to create an environment in which the unique interaction between audience, artists and technology, which constitutes a live performance, can flourish in the setting of The Public Activity Center. Some key issues to be considered are set out below:

Audience Cohesion

The way in which an audience is arranged, in relation to the performance, plays a key role in creating a successful atmosphere where audiences feel engaged by the performance and performers can communicate well with them.

Sightlines

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

Acoustics

Good hearing is as important as good seeing. Different performance types require different acoustic conditions to be best appreciated.

Technical Requirements

Most performances rely upon some form of stage technology to facilitate them. This includes scenery, lighting, projection, sound and mechanical systems, which are used to move scenery or reconfigure the space. Provision for these systems needs to be integrated into the architecture and must be accessible and safe to use.

Interpretation

The style and type of performance and the way it uses a particular space to interpret a particular piece or to tell a story is important. You must state what type of performance(s) the design will be used for. Establishing a clear link between the performance and the architecture is a key aim of the competition. Drawings of the theatre spaces should show them in use for a performance.

Theatre as Social Space

Theatres are public buildings where people congregate, not only to see a performance but to participate in a shared experience. The Theatre village should create a vibrant place for people to meet, to hang out, to eat and

drink and to enjoy a communal festival atmosphere.

Accommodation Guide

Provide a accommodation for a range of at least three different sizes and types of performance spaces, which may be varied to suit the concept - for example:

- A 300 seat open stage venue
- An enclosed flexible space for an audience of 100
- A sequence of stages or spaces for a promenade or 'street' performance

Backstage accommodation for up to 20 performers.

Provision for delivery and setting up of scenery and equipment.

Facilities for the audience, including toilets and points of sale for tickets, food and drink and stalls selling festival merchandise, crafts and artwork.

Advertising and signage to make people aware of the venue and draw them in from the city.

Provision for technical installations for the performance (lighting, sound, projection, mechanical systems).

Provision for safe evacuation of all occupants in an emergency.

Barrier-free access for disabled people

Competition Rules and Conditions

1. The Architecture Commission of OISTAT (the International Organisation of Scenographers, Theatre Technicians and Theatre Architects) is promoting an international ideas competition in a single stage, open to architects and students of schools of architecture. Collaborations between architects and other theatre practitioners such as directors, designers, writers, technicians, actors, dancers, musicians, or students in those fields, will be welcomed, although it is not an essential requirement. Architects or students associated with members of the jury are not permitted to enter. The entry fee for the competition is €50 per entry and prize money will be awarded to winning entries in accordance with clause 4.1 below

2. **Documents to be Submitted**
 - 2.1 Drawing requirements
 - a Plans of each level, at least two sections and important elevations to a scale of not less than 1/200.
 - b three-dimensional images of the building and the theatre space.
 - c Auditorium studies showing it in use for a performance or performances.
 - d Site plan to a scale of 1/1000
 - e Models cannot be accepted, although photographs of models can be included.
 - f Drawings and text documents must not carry any means of identifying the entrant(s) apart from the code number referred to in para 2.2 (c) below.
 - 2.2 Competition entries may only be submitted electronically. Every entry shall comprise an electronic copy of the following:
 - a A single panel at AO size (841 x1189 mm) in vertical (portrait) format, submitted in pdf format at 300 dpi resolution). The document will be identified by the six figure code (e.g. 123456/dwg.pdf)
 - b A short written description of the project, the performance(s) to be staged and an explanation of the design concept (maximum 200 words). The text will be incorporated on the panels but will also be

submitted separately as an A4 size Word document. The document will be identified by the same six figure code used on the drawing (e.g. 123456/text.doc)

- c Both the drawing and text documents are to be identified by a code of six numbers to be chosen at random by the competitor(s), 10mm high, appearing in the top right hand corner of each document.
 - d A completed entry form in Word format, including the same code no. as in para 2.2 (c) above. The entry form can be downloaded from the website.
 - e All text is to be in English.
- 2.3 This is an ideas competition and there is no intention that the winning entry will be built.
- 2.4 Entries will not be returned by OISTAT. Competitors should retain copies of their work.

3. Competition Schedule

- 3.1 The competition documents and conditions will be available from 12 October 2016 on the OISTAT Website: www.oistat.org
- 3.2 Questions can be sent by email to archcom@oistat.org Questions should be written in English and must be received no later than 9 December 2016.
- 3.3 The answers to the questions will be posted on the Website from 15 December 2016.
- 3.4 Competition entries are to be uploaded electronically to the OISTAT website. Entries and payment submission open on 17 February 2017. Entries must be received on or before 22 April 2017. Late entries will be disqualified.
- 3.5 The entry fee for the competition is €50 per entry. Competitors will pay via pay pal on the website. Entries submitted without an entry fee will not be considered by the jury.
- 3.6 All entries will be handled by a third party and the jury will not know the origin of the entries.

4. Prizes

- 4.1. The first prize will be €5,000, the second prize will be €2,500 and the third prize will be €1,000. There will be three additional prizes of €500 each. In addition to these prizes, there will be honourable mentions. The jury reserves the right to modify the distribution of prize money, within the same total amount and number of prizes.
- 4.2 The results of the competition will be announced on the OISTAT website on 16 May 2017. Prizes will be presented at the *World Stage Design* event in Taipei between 1-9 July 2017 and paid electronically to those unable to attend, after the prize-giving.

5. Publication

- 5.1 The competition entries will become the property of OISTAT and may be published and exhibited in any country at the discretion of OISTAT.
- 5.2 OISTAT will respect and acknowledge the copyright of the participants.

6. Acceptance of Conditions

- 6.1 By submitting an entry, participants or participating teams will:
 - a agree to the rules and regulations as set out in this programme.
 - b declare that the proposed design is their own work.
 - c agree to accept the decisions of the jury as final.
 - d agree not disclose their identities or publicise their entry in any way before the results are announced. Any breach of this rule will render the entry invalid.

7. Jury

- 7.1 The international jury will consist of 4 theatre architects and one experienced theatre practitioner. The jury will be chaired by the chair of the OISTAT Architecture Commission.
- 7.2. In case of the absence of a juror, OISTAT will assign another qualified person as a member of the jury.

- 7.3 The jury will produce a report explaining the reasons for its decisions and commenting on the prize-winning and honourably mentioned entries.
- 7.4. The report of the jury will be published on the OISTAT website.
- 7.5 The jury will select at least 25 entries for an exhibition at the *World Stage Design* exhibition in Taipei in July 2017.
- 7.6. An electronic catalogue illustrating all entries with the jury report will be published and will be available at the *World Stage Design* exhibition and will be available to download from the OISTAT website.
- 7.7 OISTAT will offer the results of the competition to the international press (publications covering theatre design and architecture)