

Domus Academy Scholarship Competition Urban Vision & Architectural Design Master's Degree Beyond the Wall

A Manifesto for the Upcoming World

If there is a hard, high wall and an egg that breaks against it, no matter how right the wall or how wrong the egg, I will stand on the side of the egg. Why? Because each of us is an egg, a unique soul enclosed in a fragile egg. Each of us is confronting a high wall. The high wall is the system which forces us to do the things we would not ordinarily see fit to do as individuals . . . We are all human beings, individuals, fragile eggs. We have no hope against the wall: it's too high, too dark, too cold. To fight the wall, we must join our souls together for warmth, strength. We must not let the system control us -- create who we are. It is we who created the system. - Haruki Murakami, Jerusalem Prize acceptance speech

The Latin noun “murus” comes from the Sanskrit root “minor” or “fix a pole on the ground”. The pole is intended as a primary element of the construction technique used to build fences even before the filling techniques would transform this divisive factor in what we now refer to as the architectural form. The wall can be understood both as the foundation of the architectural construction system, both as a symbol of separation, both in its plural meaning “the wall”, as a historic urban boundary. Over the centuries the term “wall” has been enriched with many meanings, some of those related to technical aspects, some other ones geo-political, others to those metaphorical. Some walls are considered excellent examples of engineering and aesthetic sensibility, like the Great Wall of China and Hadrian's Wall. Other walls are perceived as historical memories of traumatic events such as the Berlin Wall or examples of political tensions between states as the Us- Mexico Border. The wall may be a minimum object, such as the structural element of a house or a land border, as the barrier between Turkey and Syria. Each wall has a story, a reason to be a memory. Too often we tend to judge the presence of a wall without first questioning about the fundamentals reasons that make it up, without looking at the complexity that generated it.

Architects and urban planners have been for centuries the designers of walls and it is precisely this element that we would like to analyze within the competition. Each participant is required to question the concept of “wall” in order to propose a project that helps how to interpret the present and generate new visions for the future. The wall must not be viewed purely as an architectural element but used to generate a spatial and significant project also in the urban and landscape scale. Each participant is free to decide whether the wall is positive or negative element, everted or introverted, present or absent, single or multiple, constructive or ephemeral, reduced or expanded, functional or ludic. The 1933 Le Corbusier “Plan Obus” for Algiers as well as the 1969 Superstudio “Continuum Monument” inspire more relevant and consistent visions in this field. Starting from a very pragmatic analysis of the wall, all participants must submit through a clear and eloquent visual process their design work on the wall (or deconstruction of the wall). They must make explicit costs, techniques as well as the formal results. Through their projects they will have the possibility to express agreement or disagreement with the great theoretical question of this element that, finally, has to become architecture, urban plan or landscape. A wall, is not only a wall.

Brief:

Candidates are requested to select an existing border, wall, boundaries located within a compact urban tissue of any city all over the world, or in any possible terrestrial or extra-terrestrial landscape and following the most appropriate formula according to the main characteristics of the context, they are asked to design a solution (create a wall, destroy it, implement, cut...), able to re-activate the intensity of use of that space. Thus, candidates should demonstrate the capacity to conceive the architectural project as a process concurring to the definition of the urban pattern, by interpreting its physical, cultural, economical and social features. At the same time they should be able to control the complexity of the architectural process, combining morphology, typology, technology and aesthetics at the different scales. A special focus is required towards the Manifesto: a short declaration of intents and principles related with the delivered project.

Materials Required:

- Short written Manifesto of the project in A4 format (max 1 page) in pdf digital file.
- Boards of project in A3 format (max 4 boards) 300 dpi resolution file in PDF digital file.
- Portfolio of projects
- Detailed curriculum vitae
- Motivation statement
- Copy of Degree Certificate
- Academic Transcripts
- Domus Academy Application Form*

The candidates are asked to send their materials in one single file in .PDF format. Any further attached material will be considered a plus and will be evaluated by the jury.

* Application fee is waived for competition participants.

Prizes:

- One scholarship covering 60% of the total tuition fee of the Master Program
- One scholarship covering 50% of the total tuition fee of the Master Program
- One scholarship covering 40% of the total tuition fee of the Master Program
- Two special mentions covering 20% of the total tuition fee of the Master Program

Fall Intake 2017 Deadline:

Electronic entries can be sent to: vanessa@saiprograms.com no later than April 17, 2017. Candidates will be informed about the results of the competition by e-mail on May 11, 2017.