

Steven Holl Architects Wins Herning Center of the Arts Competition

Steven Holl Architects winning project was unveiled at a press conference in Herning, Denmark, by the Herning Center of the Arts Project Foundation. The Herning Center of the Arts will house three institutions: the Herning Art Museum, the MidWest Ensemble and the Socle du Monde. It is expected that the combination of these three institutions will enhance their international profile and the synergy between their visual art and music programs, to provide a driving cultural force for the region of central Jutland, Denmark.

Steven Holl Architect's striking design for the Herning Center of the Arts arises from a fusion of landscape and architecture and aims at "building the site". The design calls for the transformation of the existing flat site into an inspiring bermed landscape of grass mounds and pools, thereby drawing focus onto reflecting pools positioned in the south sun, while concealing the parking and service areas. The museum gallery spaces are simple, orthogonal and finely proportioned for art. Overhead curved roof sections transport natural light into the spaces, while internal gallery walls of lightweight construction provide flexibility of movement in anticipation of changing exhibition and functional requirements. The Center includes permanent and temporary exhibition galleries, a 300 seat auditorium, music rehearsal rooms, a restaurant, a media library and administrative offices. The incorporation of "green" roof technology, a geothermal HVAC system and grey water recycling, set this project apart as an exemplary design for 21st century museum architecture.

Lars Damgaard, Chair of the Trustees of the Herning Center of the Arts, said of the winning project, "Steven Holl is one of today's foremost architects and his proposal really expresses the spirit of Birk and Herning. I am very excited about this new building".

Holger Reenberg, Director of the Herning Art Museum, said, "I believe that Steven Holl's project will give Birk a beautiful and remarkable building. Herning Center of the Arts will be a milestone in Birk and Herning's proud history. Steven Holl's building combines an idiosyncratic design with all that a modern art center demands".

Regarding the winning design proposal, the competition Jury cited the following: "The central concept involves positioning the exhibition spaces in the form of rectangular quadratic cubes on top of a 'covered area', encircled by the other functions, which are all located in the building's shell. This meets perfectly the competition's wishes for a combination between openness and 'treasure trove'. In addition, it answers the desire for a flexible building in terms of how and when it is used. The building will often be open when the actual museum is closed. A majority of the jury agreed that this building will make the new Herning Center of the Arts into something significant and exciting".

After publicizing the competition in February 2005, the Herning Center of the Arts Foundation received applications from 41 architectural firms. Of these, four were selected to proceed to the final competition in May 2005: CUBO Architects (Denmark), Keith Williams Architects (United Kingdom), Snøhetta (Norway) and 3 x Nielsen (Denmark). In addition, the steering committee had already invited two distinguished architectural firms to participate, Caruso St. John Architects (United Kingdom) and the winner, Steven Holl Architects (USA).

Building is planned to commence in 2006 and completion is scheduled for 2007. The construction budget is DKK 120 million or about 19 million US dollars.

On Steven Holl Architects:

For more information on the work of Steven Holl Architects, please visit www.stevenholl.com

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