Guggenheim Helsinki Design Competition Finalists Unveiled

Six Shortlisted Concept Designs Offer New Perspectives on Museum Architecture and Represent Both Emerging and Established Practices

(HELSINKI, December 2, 2014) — The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation announced today that an independent, 11-member jury has unanimously selected six concept designs as finalists from the 1,715 anonymous submissions to the international architectural competition for a proposed Guggenheim museum in Helsinki, Finland. The shortlisted entries represent both emerging and established architectural practices in seven countries and offer fresh and distinctive approaches to museum design and to the changing role of the twenty-first-century museum.

The finalists propose a range of responses to the competition brief, as illustrated in the synopses below:

**GH-76091181** comprises a ring of slender, sculptural towers faced with timber shingles, reminiscent of vernacular architecture, gathered around a cathedral-like central space. The towers, with their play of light and shadow, create an architectural beacon, visible by land or sea, while the central space, sheltered from extremes of weather yet part of the quayside, provides an exceptional new site for public events on the waterfront. Exhibition galleries are housed in timber cabinets stacked within the towers. Bridges connecting the towers offer respite space for visitors between experiencing art and offer new viewing points over the city and harbor.
**GH-5631681770** reconfigures circulation and use of the East and West Harbors to establish an area of industrial activity and an area of cultural activity, with the museum as the link between the city and the waterfront. In a critical shift from the idea of a building as static object to a building that accommodates the flux of daily life, a city street runs through the interior of the museum, opening it to appropriation by the citizens and creating a combination of programs: a museum program and an unpredictable street program, in which visitors may become productive and creative users of the space.

**GH-04380895** links the museum to the rest of the city through a pedestrian footbridge to Tähtitorninvuori Park and a promenade along the port, including a food hall and a market during the warm months. The museum programs are housed in pavilion-scale buildings treated as independent, fragmentary volumes within this landscape, allowing for a strong integration of outdoor display and event spaces with interior exhibition galleries. The ensemble is made to stand out from afar by being composed around a landmark tower. The use of charred timber in the facade evokes the process of regeneration that occurs when forests burn and then grow back stronger than before.

**GH-121371443** drapes a skin of textured glass panels over a bar-like, two-story interior structure, creating an environmentally sustainable public space between the facade and the gallery volumes, with natural light diffused throughout. In an unusual innovation, the element that makes the building sustainable—the intelligent glass wrapper, which uses technology such as Nanogel glazing and rollable thermal shutters—is also the element that distinguishes the project visually, giving the building an ethereal presence. Within the building, an annex for the work of younger Nordic artists is paired with a market hall, and a service pavilion encloses a sculpture garden.
GH-1128435973 creates two facilities in dialogue with each other. The ground floor is an adaptive reuse of the existing Makasiini Terminal, conceived as a public space that extends the pedestrian boardwalk into the building. This is a place for education, civic activity, and incubating ideas. The second floor is an exhibition hall on stilts, which hovers above the terminal building, partly removed from everyday life. The long rectangular volume offers a flexible space for all types of exhibitions and adheres to the notion of a museum as a space apart. Through this dual scheme, the proposed museum could engage its public to co-create value and meaning.

GH-5059206475 reuses the laminated wood structure of the Makasiini Terminal to rebuild a wooden volume that exactly follows the geometry of the original, and preserves the current views from the park and the adjacent buildings. Within this structure—essentially an undisturbed network of existing conditions—the project creates 31 rooms: eight of them measuring 20 x 20 m, 18 of them 6.5 x 6.5 m, four of them 10 x 10 m, and one 40 x 100 m. This rigid set of spatial conditions is combined with a deliberate distribution of climates based on the program and principles of sustainability, with each room acclimatized independently so that the galleries together form a “thermal onion.”

Full details and descriptions of the six finalists are now available at designguggenheimhelsinki.org/finalists.

Richard Armstrong, Director of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Foundation, said, “As we saw from the unprecedented response to Stage One of the competition, this open, independent process has brought to Helsinki exciting, innovative design ideas from all over the world. The jury has chosen six deeply thoughtful design approaches, each of which opens extraordinary possibilities for a Guggenheim in Helsinki and asks us to imagine what a museum of the future can be. We are excited to see the finalists develop the potential of their visionary designs further, and we thank everyone who has contributed to this conversation so far—from the 1,715 competitors who created engaging and diverse submissions to the 200,000 people who have visited the competition website.”
The competition jury was selected by the Guggenheim, the State of Finland, the City of Helsinki, and the Finnish Association of Architects (SAFA). Mark Wigley, Professor and Dean Emeritus of the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation of Columbia University, serves as chair. The other jury members are Mikko Aho, Director of City Planning and Architect, City of Helsinki; Jeanne Gang, Founder and Principal, Studio Gang Architects; Juan Herreros, Founder and Principal, Estudio Herreros; Anssi Lassila, Architect and Founder, OOPEAA Office for Peripheral Architecture; Erkki Leppävuori, President and CEO, VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland; Rainer Mahlamäki, Professor and Founder, Lahdelma & Mahlamäki Architects; Helena Säteri, Director General, Ministry of the Environment, Finland; Nancy Spector, Deputy Director and Jennifer and David Stockman Chief Curator, Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation; Yoshiharu Tsukamoto, Founder, Atelier Bow-Wow; and Ritva Viljanen, Deputy Mayor, City of Helsinki.

Wigley said, “Each of the finalists offers a distinctive and original way to create new public space for Helsinki, and each challenges the Guggenheim to develop unprecedented models of museum programming. Some designs make daring use of the existing Makasiini Terminal, or recall an aspect of the cultural memory of Helsinki. Some propose unforeseen mixtures of civic and museum space, or boldly juxtapose the spaces for more traditional exhibition making with new kinds of space for not-yet-imagined creations. All of the shortlisted designs are a compelling first step, and we eagerly look forward to seeing how they are more fully explored in the next stage of the competition.”

The official jury statement, available on the competition website, notes that, “The final shortlist encompasses a number of different scenarios: from schemes which are more experimental in engaging with the program and whose outward form will only emerge in the second phase, to ones that might seem more resolved from the outside but whose programmatic concept will only evolve fully in the second phase. The single theme, which linked the chosen six, and united the jury, was the impulse to expand the idea of what a museum can be. How can this new museum create a vital, meaningful, public, and intellectual presence within Helsinki? Which of these concepts will develop so that they bear comparison with the city’s architectural exemplars?”

Helsinki mayor Jussi Pajunen said, “It has been a great honor for Helsinki to be the object of such an overwhelming global interest in terms of the architectural competition. Furthermore, the designs provide a good understanding of the vast potential that the South Harbor site holds. I am also excited about the lively discussion regarding the role of design and architecture in city development around the competition. Indeed, I would like to express my appreciation to the organizers and the jury for all the work that has been done to reach this phase and to identify the finalists.”

**Finalist Teams**

With the announcement of the jury’s selection, the names of the finalist teams have been released by independent competition manager Malcolm Reading Consultants. In alphabetical order, the finalist teams are:

- AGPS Architecture Ltd. (Zurich, Switzerland and Los Angeles, United States of America)
- Asif Khan Ltd. (London, United Kingdom)
- Fake Industries Architectural Agonism (New York, United States of America; Barcelona, Spain; and Sydney, Australia)
In accordance with European Union procurement rules, the names of the competitors were not known to the jury, which identified all submissions only by a registration number. While the names of the six teams are now public, the designs have not been matched to the teams, nor will the jurors or public know which team is responsible for which design until the winner has been selected.

Team Biographies

AGPS Architecture Ltd. was founded in 1984 and is led by principals Marc Angélil, Sarah Graham and Manuel Scholl. Among its recent notable projects are the Portland Aerial Tram in Portland, Oregon; the Children’s Museum of Los Angeles; the B35 Apartment Building in Zurich; Dock Midfield, Zurich International Airport; the Zurich International School; a headquarters extension of the International Union for Conservation of Nature in Gland-Geneva; and an urban upgrading project in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Asif Khan Ltd. was founded by principal Asif Khan in 2007 upon his graduation from the Architectural Association. Notable projects include the MegaFaces Pavilion at the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics (awarded a Cannes Lions Grand Prix for Innovation); the Coca-Cola Beatbox Pavilion at the 2012 Olympic Games in London (with Pernilla Ohrstedt); Radiant Lines for The Light in Winter Festival 2014 in Melbourne, a shortlisted design for the UK Pavilion at the Milan Expo 2015; and Parhelia for Swarovsky at Design Miami.

Fake Industries Architectural Agonism was founded in 2007 by principals Urtzi Grau (who currently teaches at the Princeton School of Architecture and Cooper Union) and Cristina Goberna (who currently teaches at Columbia University). Dedicated to the proposition that public potential remains unexplored in the existing built environment, the firm has produced or reproduced a variety of exhibitions, writings and proposals, as well as projects that include a new velodrome for the City of Medellín and Superphosphates, a master plan for the nineteenth-century mining village of Aldea Moret in the west of Spain.

Haas Cook Zemmrich STUDIO2050 was founded in 2012 by principals Martin Haas, David Cook and Stephan Zemmrich in Stuttgart, Germany. Notable projects in Germany include the City Quarter T5 in Mannheim; Alnatura headquarters in Darmstadt; Geometry Global headquarters in Hamburg; the Rheinschloss Wohnturm, a new entrance to the town of Waldshut (currently under construction); and the redesign of the Kulturhaus Karlstorbahnhof in Heidelberg (in progress).

Moreau Kusunoki Architectes was founded in 2012 by principals Kusunoki Hiroko and Nicolas Moreau. Notable projects include the new Théâtre du Beauvaisis; the Fonds Régional d’Art Contemporain in Marseille; the Matsuri Boëtie Restaurant in Paris; and the plaza for the new Palais de Justice designed by Renzo Piano at the Porte de Clichy in Paris.

**Competition Next Steps**

The six finalists will be invited to visit the site of the proposed museum in January 2015, receive additional briefing to further develop the potential that the jury has identified in their initial designs, and produce physical models by March 2015. The winning design will be announced in June 2015, with an award of €100,000 (approximately $136,000) for the first-place team and €55,000 (approximately $75,000) for each runner-up.

Finalist designs for Stages One and Two of the competition, and a selection of honorable mentions from Stage One as noted by the jury, will be presented in a public exhibition in Helsinki in spring 2015. Images and brief descriptions of all 1,715 submissions are online at the competition website.

The Guggenheim Helsinki Design Competition is managed by Malcolm Reading Consultants, London.

**Support for the Competition**

The Guggenheim Helsinki Design Competition is made possible by the Guggenheim Helsinki Supporting Foundation, Swedish Cultural Foundation, Guggenheim Helsinki Association, Louise och Göran Ehrnrooth Foundation, and private individuals who wish to remain anonymous, with special thanks to the BMW Group for its support.

**About the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation**

Founded in 1937, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation is dedicated to promoting the understanding and appreciation of art, primarily of the modern and contemporary periods, through exhibitions, education programs, research initiatives, and publications. The Guggenheim network that began in the 1970s when the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, was joined by the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, has since expanded to include the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (opened 1997) and the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi (currently in development). Looking to the future, the Guggenheim Foundation continues to forge international collaborations that take contemporary art, architecture, and design beyond the walls of the museum, including with the Guggenheim UBS MAP Global Art Initiative and with The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Chinese Art Initiative. More information about the foundation can be found at [guggenheim.org](http://guggenheim.org).

**About Malcolm Reading Consultants**

A specialist in architectural competitions for museums and arts, heritage, and nonprofit organizations, the London-based Malcolm Reading Consultants (MRC) has run architectural competitions for the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Glasgow School of Art, the UK Pavilion at the Shanghai Expo, and the Library for Foreign Literature in Moscow, among others. MRC believes in the power of design to create new perceptions and to act as an inspiration. The consultancy’s role in the Guggenheim Helsinki Design Competition includes liaising with stakeholders at the Guggenheim Foundation, the City of
Helsinki, the State of Finland, and the Finnish Association of Architects (SAFA), and ensuring absolute independence in the competition process. For more information, visit malcolmreading.co.uk.

#1368
December 2, 2014

More Information
Competition website: designguggenheimhelsinki.org
Project website: guggenheimhki.fi

Media Contacts
Jukka-Pekka Myllys
Miltton
(358) 45 673 3056
jukka-pekka.myllys@miltton.fi

Tina Vaz
Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation
1 212 360 4284
tvaz@guggenheim.org