

new European architecture

A10



#9
MAY/JUN 2006

€6.50

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Start

- Car Museum, Teufen
- Civil Engineering Faculty, Osijek
- Kopernik Research Center, Warsaw
- Multi-focus reception centre, Apeldoorn
- Cultural centre, Soignies
- Housing projects, Bratislava
- Estonian National Museum, Tartu

Ready

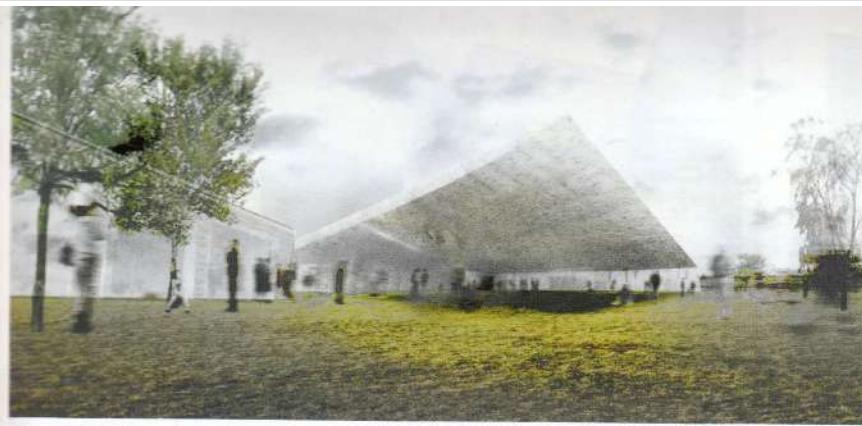
- Sushi bar, Kharkov
- Gallery and offices, Stockholm
- Housing, London
- Housing, Eysins-Nyon
- Gymnasium, Jürjala
- School, Krk
- Kindergarten, Madrid
- Visitors' centre, Azores
- Housing, Tilburg
- Extension of primary school, Brussels
- Mixed-use building, Prague
- Museum, Les-Lucs-sur-Boulogne
- House, Ljubljana

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- Gehry's 'tippy' Hotel Marqués De Riscal
- Interview: global provincials
- 5+1 associati
- Belgrade, city in transition
- Architectural tour: Wiener melange
- Instant history: UN Studio's Mercedes Museum, Stuttgart

Section: Limitless glass





↑ Entrance area



↑ Spaces for temporary exhibitions



↑ View from the museum towards the former runway



←↑ The museum forms the intersection of the lake and runway.

Estonian National Museum, Tartu

The competition-winning design by Dan Dorell, Lina Ghotmeh and Tsuyoshi Tane is a spatial journey that is as flexible, provocative and experientially rich as possible.

ESTONIA — TEXT: TRIIN OJARI

After ten years of economic growth at a capitalist tempo, the former Soviet Union still strikes the rest of the world as an exotic place, even a post-Soviet theme park. The regime that proclaimed utopia for nearly half a century may be gone, but it has left indelible marks on the local environment. The sensitive issue of recognizing and interpreting this situation became a key challenge of the architecture competition for the new Estonian National Museum. What was possibly the most important competition of the decade in Estonia, unexpectedly raised a number of questions related to the specifics of architecture, such as identity, genius loci and interpretation of recent history. It is a fair while since an architectural design provoked such a wide discussion in Estonia on architecture's capacity to symbolize the nation's complicated history.

The museum will be located on the outskirts of Tartu at Raadi, an old country estate where it stood before World War II. The setting is by no means picturesque; during the Soviet era the site was a military airfield

(which meant that Tartu was closed to outsiders). It is impossible to ignore the aggressive remnants of this past, but nearly all of the proposals did precisely that. The winning design, the aptly named 'Memory Field', was an exception, uniting the history of the place with the 'story' told by the exhibits.

The international competition attracted 108 entries, of which only 12 came from Estonia. The jury, headed by Estonia's minister of culture and including only one foreign member (Dutch architect Winy Maas), made a very bold decision in choosing the entry by three young architects, Dan Dorell (Paris), Lina Ghotmeh (Paris) and Tsuyoshi Tane (London). It envisages a 350 metre-long glass building, with an outdoor extension in the shape of a one-kilometre runway. Visitors are guided through the exhibition spaces of the greyish, one-storey building out onto an airfield receding into infinity: the 'memory field'. This is a huge public space, a place for open air sculptures and outdoor events. The design has just the right amount of provocativeness and lyrical sensibility for a symbolic

building; it is critical of its context at the same time demythologizing museum building hierarchies.

The architecture of post-Soviet Estonia has been praised for being free and open to competition. The National Museum competition proves this yet again. There have been some complaints that work shamelessly turns the site into an aesthetic object, but this is the nature of the National Museum. The winning entry's vision looks as if it will achieve this dual objective. ←

'MEMORY FIELD', THE NEW ESTONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM, 2005-2009

Architect: Dan Dorell, Lina Ghotmeh and Tsuyoshi Tane
Client: Estonian National Museum
Address: Raadi, Tartu
Info: www.museumcompetition.org



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