



Eurohypo: Heroes of the Ghetto Square in Krakow wins Urban Quality Award – successful combination of memorial and public space recognised

- Projects from Berlin and Hanover share second place
- Special commendation for open air library in Magdeburg

Eschborn, 30 November 2011. *Heroes of the Ghetto Square* in Krakow, Poland combines a memorial, a work of art and a living public space. Today in Frankfurt am Main, the public square was declared the winner of the Urban Quality Award 2011. Joint second place went to the *Klagesmarkt/ Goseriede, Hanover City 2020+* project and the *Park am Gleisdreieck* in Berlin. There was also a special commendation for the *Lesezeichen Salbke* open air library in Magdeburg.

Eurohypo established the annual prize in 2006 as a way of recognising trailblazing sustainable urban development projects. Eurohypo's CEO, Thomas Köntgen explains what prompted Eurohypo to create the Urban Quality Award: "We are interested in improving the quality of city life and in town planning which recognises that people need an environment for living." As Thomas Köntgen sees it, the bank's role as a provider of commercial real estate financing also comes with responsibilities.

Eurohypo gives a total of EUR 50,000 in prize money to projects that have come up with the best solutions to the environmental, economic, demographic and social issues associated with creating a sustainable city.

The guest speaker at the award ceremony at Westhafen Pier in Frankfurt was former Culture Minister Professor Julian Nida-Rümelin, who spoke about the philosophy of urbanity: "Urbanity simply means the ethics of the town". In his presentation, Professor Nida-Rümelin examined what conditions are needed in order for different lifestyles and cultures to thrive in the city. Cities, he said, "are characterised by different cultures and lifestyles. This is not only linked to migration: it also reflects the fact that different lifestyles associated with socio-economic status or a particular set of values have to coexist in order to prevent urban fragmentation, while at the same time preserving the basic principles of respect and tolerance." Town planning has to reconcile all these elements.

"Of the 90 project entries submitted for the Urban Quality Award 2011, an unusually high number were of exceptional quality," said Prof. Dr Schöbel-Rutschmann from the Technical University of Munich, who, with his team of experts, reviewed all the entries. "That made it very hard to come up with a shortlist this year. In the end, the jury decided to award the prize to three projects and give one special commendation as well."

Gold for Heroes of the Ghetto Square in Krakow

This year, the independent jury of experts – architects, town planners and journalists – felt that the *Heroes of the Ghetto Square* in Krakow was the most impressive example of sustainable urban development. The project stands head and shoulders above all the other entries in view of its historical significance alone. During the Second World War, this square in the city's Podgorze district was the transshipment point for Jews from the Krakow ghetto, who had to gather there before being transported to the concentration camps. Central to the square's new look are the 70 empty bronze chairs representing the possessions left behind by the deportees. The chairs are there to remind today's passers-by of what happened there, but they also invite them to make the square a living place. People now gather in the square to celebrate, to make music and to chat. The place's history is not a crushing burden; instead, they are encouraged to engage in dialogue. The jury awarded first prize to the project by the Krakow-based architecture firm Projektów Lewicki Łatak together with EUR 25,000 in prize money.

Joint Silver Award

The Silver Award plus EUR 10,000 in prize money went to the project submitted by the landscape architects from JBBUG (johannes böttger büro urbane gestalt) and planners from the architects' firm ASTOC, both of which are based in Cologne. The two firms have worked to redesign the Klagesmarkt and Goseriede in Hanover so as to define a new inner city space in the area. The eyesores of the "car-friendly city" of the 1950s and 1960s have been removed to recreate a triangle of green for city dwellers in the historic centre of Hanover.

Another silver Award and prize money of EUR 10,000 was awarded in recognition of the work by Atelier Loidl from Berlin, which transformed a huge tract of abandoned inner city land into a valuable recreational and leisure area. The Park am Gleisdreieck is located in between the Schöneberg and Kreuzberg districts. A typical Berlin park, it combines solidity and stimulation for the senses. The large space can be put to a wide range of uses, from recreation to a meeting point to a source of inspiration. The jury of the Urban Quality Award felt that the creation of a new green area in Berlin merited second place and EUR 10,000 in prize money.

Special commendation

The smaller-scale, but remarkably original public structure produced by the Leipzig-based KARO* architects in conjunction with Architektur+Netzwerk in Magdeburg – the open air library *Lesezeichen Salbke* in Magdeburg – was given a special commendation and EUR 5,000 in prize money. Not only is it a social sculpture, but it also acts as a noise barrier and offers the residents of the Salbke neighbourhood a meeting place and an open air library with accessible displays from which everyone is free to choose something to read. In making this gesture, Eurohypo wanted to support the local residents' efforts to preserve the library.

About the Urban Quality Award

As a bank in commercial real estate financing, Eurohypo AG believes that it has a particular responsibility to contribute to the quality of city life and to sustainable urban development. Established in 2006, the Urban Quality Award expresses this sense of duty. This year, the prize was open to projects in Germany, Eurohypo's home market and Poland – a core market.

The independent Urban Quality Award jury comprised:

- Professor Sophie Wolfrum, Faculty of Architecture, Technical University of Munich
- Professor emeritus Klaus Daniels, Munich, TU Darmstadt, Department of Architecture, Design and Building Technology
- Dr Krzysztof Domaradzki, architect and town planner, Warsaw
- Ewa Porebska, editor-in-chief of Architektura-murator, Warsaw
- Robert Schäfer, Munich, editor-in-chief of Garten+Landschaft and Topos, represented by Tanja Gallenmüller, the editor of Topos

A team headed up by Professor Sören Schöbel-Rutschmann from the Technical University of Munich was responsible for producing a shortlist from the 90 projects submitted.

Further information is available at www.urbanqualityaward.com.

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