

DUTCH JURY REPORT

Apples and pears

A jury's standard answer to the questions that follow their decision is that choosing a winner ultimately comes down to comparing apples to pears, for the deeper the entries are discussed, the greater the differences and the more difficult the choice will be.

The most remarkable about the Concrete Design Competition is that the jury is asked to do just that: compare apples to pears. Unlike other contests, the Concrete Design Competition does not give specific rules to which participants must adhere, has no site and no program. Instead, designers are given one theme to investigate in relation to concrete. The result is an inspiring series of seemingly incomparable ideas.

The theme of the 9th Concrete Design Competition was 'FORM-WORKS'. Form works as in investigating new molding techniques to shape the viscous concrete, but also the way this viscous property can be used to experiment in the resulting shape and texture itself.

Form-works

The jury noticed that most of the entries focused on a few scale size aspects of the subject: micro, surface, shape or context. A minority explored all aesthetic poetic aspects from micro, surface, shape and context. Most of the entries were quite technical with many details, some of them really well thought out. Modularity almost seemed to be the second theme in this competition, so often this was the subject of the entry.

The entries that made it into the last round – the nominees – show this variety of interpretation and the difference in type of entry from concept to detailed design.

Online jury session

Different from other years was the fact that the jury was forced to judge the entries online due to coronavirus. Usually, the members of the jury would walk around and judge the A1 posters, now they had a pdf with all the entries.

For the first round the jurors had been asked to pick their top 5 before the jury session. This way they could give each poster the time it deserved to be judged. Combined, these five top 5's resulted in a shortlist of 19 entries, all of which were discussed.

A further round of elections followed, followed by an in-depth discussion to choose the winners.

Nominees

In the last round the entries have been discussed in depth by the jury. Because of their quality the jury wanted to mention all of them in their report, not just the winners. The nominees that fell out of prizes are discussed in order of their unique code.

AB270 Pink Reed was praised by the jury for the completeness of the plan and the high quality of the renderings. They appreciated that the contestant had poured concrete to test his assumptions. They thought the idea of reed as part of the form-work not really innovative, and missed this poetic idea reflected in the interior.

BE333 Let it Bee was highly appreciated for its presentation. It was presented as a conceptual idea in a very topical theme. The jury thought it a good example that could easily be mass produced. But they wondered why the contestant had not poured any mock-ups and they missed the substantiation of this idea on the panels.

CA214 Modular e-bench was nominated for the simplicity of the shape that has numerous ways to be used. The jury appreciated the depth of testing the idea and the technical details. However, they thought the peltier and modularity were not developed as far as in other projects and the idea of uncomfortable sitting on an aluminum plate was the deciding factor to drop the entry for the prizes.

ES020 Echoseat. The first thought of the jury was: this rocking street furniture will injure the foot of the user. But they liked the well thought out idea behind it very much, that these objects start a conversation in today's society of coronavirus and mobile phones. Although the contestant investigated a lot of properties of the concrete, this could have been more substantiated.

SC417 Slag-crete. The jury was interested in the way the thermal properties of the concrete were used in a modular system that forms an aesthetic wall. They appreciated the idea presented in a building. The jury was of the opinion that the individual modular blocks themselves could have given a more poetic shape next to the simple functionality to enhance the overall aesthetics.

Honorary mention

In the end it was a close call for the number three and the jury wanted to mention this special project next to the winners. Considering the total difference between this project and the third winner, you can understand the tough deliberation the jury was in.

KR999 Chain link had the sympathy of the jury because of the outside- the-box shape of the concrete which was experienced as refreshing. The form-work was well thought out and explained in detail. But the jury did not believe in the construction and stability of the use of these poetic elements.

Third Place

MS999 Multi façade was appreciated for its complete idea, from the material properties of the concrete, the composite of the panel to the context of a building and how the rainwater was distributed from the roof through the panels. The simplicity of the formwork makes it is very scalable for mass production. The contestant chose for properties in the concrete to distribute and hold the water. Pockets ensure that the plants have soil and nutrition to grow. In the opinion of the jury the subject was well chosen: it is important to think about ways to make the built environment more sustainable.

The jury would have liked to see the distribution of water through the panels to be tested. The jury thought it was a missed opportunity to give more attention and enhanced aesthetics to the panels itself or to the placements of the pockets and the placement of the panels on the façade..

Second Place

DD462 Velvet Concrete was chosen by the jury because of the look and feel of the presented surface and form. The soft and gentle surface amazed them. They thought it almost resembled the skin of an animal. They hesitated with the idea of using leather, while the trends are towards less animal based products.

The explanation and the simple formwork were highly appreciated. The mold makes it possible to replicate this process multiple times, while it each time it produces a slightly different panel. The edges of each panel match the next panel, because of the fixed edges of the mold.

Textile form-work, although not new, is seen as a welcome addition to traditional options. Although the jury expects that the panel could be used in more elaborate projects than the contestant showed, they liked the texture of the wall.

The jury appreciates the fact that the contestant worked out the theme form-work on the different levels of the mold, the surface itself and the shape of the surface and showed this in context.

First Place

SW580 Acute Acoustics was unanimously chosen by all the jurors because of the brilliance of using interlocking module blocks to build a noise reduction wall that works and is pleasing to the eye.

The jury appreciated the elaboration of the shape of the elements, that have good aesthetics in themselves and when they are joined together to form the wall. Also the fact that the contestant studied sound reduction tiles to come to their chosen form, and that the stability of the wall is achieved by the curved position of the elements.

It was highly appreciated that the contestant tested the form-work and made mock-ups. The jury thought it to be reproducible, although the difficulty lies in the all sided smooth surface.

The contestant researched the theme form-works in the mold, the shape of the interlocking blocks and the shape of the blocks in their context. The shape was chosen because of the functionality of the modules and how they work together.

The jury

We thank the members of the jury of the 9th edition of the Concrete Design Competition 2019-2020 for their time and dedication:

- Juliette Bekkering
- Marieke Kums
- Max Rink
- Diederik Veenendaal
- Niels van der Hulst