Architect Luis Martínez Santa-María wins the "Fear of Columns" competition, organized by Fundació Mies van der Rohe

Luis Martínez Santa-María (Madrid, 1960), PhD architect for the Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura de Madrid, is the winner of the "Fear of Columns" competition, organized by Fundació Mies van der Rohe - as part of the celebrations for the 30-year anniversary since the reconstruction of the Pavilion - with the project I don’t want to change the world. I only want to express it.

The jury (formed by Fernando Ramos Galindo, M. Clara Riera Escalona, Jordi Ros Ballesteros, Anna Sala Giralt and Julià Bort Ricart) analysed 181 entries from 29 countries, short listing 26 projects. After discussing the merits of these projects, the jury unanimously awarded the proposal from Luis Martínez Santa-María.

The jury cited the compelling nature of the winning entry, which encapsulates the vertical component of the existing columns, in contrast to the horizontality of the Pavilion. The project denotes an absolutely contemporary approach marked by environmental awareness and the need to permanently reutilise resources, while at the same time, expresses the provisional character of an ephemeral installation, that will temporarily be affixed to the Pavilion.

Luis Martínez Santa-María was set a huge challenge: to recreate the original ionic Puig i Cadafalch columns that have presided over the Pavilion since 1929, with a budget of just 15,000 euros.

The winner refers to his columns as “sheet-steel drums, retrieved from chemical waste cemeteries, closely associated with today’s city and marked by recognisable signs, placed on top of each other and simply welded them together. They are new column tambours. They are also objets d’art, because time has undertaken to strip them of their paint and disfigure them, to deactivate their functionalism, thereby obtaining inimitable effects on their surfaces and in their dents. (...) The multicoloured row of columns made of cast-away industrial drums also establishes an ironical relationship between the threats of the industrial landscape and the ambiguous, misguided beauty it reveals. Perhaps this would have pleased Mies, who once said: I don’t want to change the world. I only want to express it".
The jury also awarded:

- Second PRIZE to the project entitled “Shades Of Grey” by Amir Shouri and Fereshteh Tabe (New York, USA).
- Third PRIZE to the entry entitled “Politics of the Myth” by Miguel Ángel Díaz Camacho (Getafe, Spain).
- Fourth PRIZE to “Paper Romance” by Nicoletta Facitondo, Margherita Valente, Andrea Salvatore, Salvatore Dentamaro, Nicola Dario Baldassare and Pasquale Cipri of the Collettivo Arcipelago (Bari, Italy).

On 1st June 2016, the recreation will be launched at the 30-year anniversary of the Pavilion’s reconstruction, in a public ceremony. The recreated columns will be physically present for a planned maximum of five months, at the front of Mies van der Rohe Pavilion.

More information:

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