

Press release

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The Architectural Association Foster + Partners Prize 2012

The Architectural Association and Foster + Partners are pleased to announce the award of the Foster + Partners Prize, which is presented annually to the AA Diploma student whose portfolio best addresses the themes of sustainability and infrastructure. The recipient is selected jointly by the AA and Foster + Partners at the end of each academic year.

This year's prize has been awarded to Yvonne Weng, of Diploma Unit 17, for her project 'The 6th Layer – Explorative Canopy Trail'.

Set in the context of Brazilian Amazon rainforest, the project recognizes the reciprocal relationship between humanity and the forest and sees the forest as a natural infrastructure to work with, instead of against. The design focuses on creating an ultra-lightweight, self-sustaining and easily deployable architectural system, which occupies the space at the top of the tree canopies. The extra layer of space created opens up a new territory that inspires new ways in which to perceive, occupy and experience the forest.

Yvonne Weng, and the other six shortlisted candidates, will be invited to exhibit their work in the gallery in Foster + Partners' studio in October, when there will be a formal reception and a cheque will be presented.

The themes of sustainability and infrastructure that underpin the award were selected to highlight themes of common interest to the AA and Foster + Partners and for their significance in contemporary architectural discourse more globally.

Mouzhan Majidi, Chief Executive of Foster + Partners, said:

"This is the third year we have awarded this prize and in Yvonne Weng's project we see it gaining strength. We hope very much that the debate this prize generates will encourage students to address themes that are of increasing relevance to architecture today."

Brett Steele, Director of the Architectural Association School of Architecture, said:

"The AA School is delighted once again to have participated in the judging of the Foster + Partners Prize. The work of this year's winner indicates the enthusiasm and imagination shown by AA Diploma students in addressing challenging, topical issues in architecture. We are grateful to Foster + Partners for their continued support of the prize and the innovative work it encourages."

Yvonne Weng, winner of the 2012 Foster + Partners Prize said:

"Programmatically, the project is centred on scientific exploration and harvesting medicinal plants, which provides an alternative use of the forest without destroying it. At the same time, the positive occupation

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of the territory it enables could provide a level of surveillance that helps to protect both the endangered environment and the indigenous population."

Press information

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The AA School The Architecture Association School is the world's most renowned and influential international school of architecture. Since 1847 it has pioneered a belief in architecture as profession, culture and form of human enquiry and is credited with fostering the creation of worldwide leaders of architecture.

AA School alumni include architectural leaders Zaha Hadid, Rem Koolhaas, Lord Rogers, Will Alsop and many others. Through its unique, year-long, unit based system of teaching, direct intervention in cities and its intensively collaborative, team-based approach to learning, the school brings together disconnected worlds, fresh ideas and inspiring insights. The AA School is celebrated worldwide as an imaginative setting for architectural culture.

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