

Press release

25 June 2013

The Architectural Association Foster + Partners Prize

The Architectural Association and Foster + Partners are pleased to announce the award of the 2013 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 John Naylor, of Diploma Unit 16, for his project 'Bamboo Lakou'.

Set in the context of Haiti – a country suffering massive deforestation – the project combines the creation of a sustainable bamboo-growing infrastructure with the development of the vernacular 'Lakou' communal courtyard typology. The aims of the project are to establish bamboo within the Haitian construction sector, as an earthquake-resistant alternative to concrete, and to set in motion a long-term reforestation strategy.

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 global significance in contemporary architectural discourse.

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The AA School

The Architecture Association School is the world's most renowned international and influential 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.

"In John Naylor's project we see how social and environmental goals can be complementary. We hope very much that the debate this prize generates will encourage students to address the themes of sustainability and infrastructure, which are of increasing relevance to architecture today."

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Mouzhan Majidi, Senior Partner and Chief Executive

"John Naylor's project demonstrates the ways in which infrastructural ideas – and architectural imagination – might today expand beyond the clichés of Modernism to become life itself, literally breathing life into communities, cities and entire countries – today and long into the future."

Brett Steele, Director of the Architectural Association School of Architecture

"An exploration of the physical properties of bamboo presented the opportunity to create a new constructional vernacular in Haiti, with bamboo-framed buildings capable of resisting hurricanes and earthquakes. This re-materialisation of the country's construction industry also aims to engender the widespread growth of bamboo – a material with a range of ecological benefits."

John Naylor, winner of the 2013 Foster + Partners Prize