NATIONAL COMPETITION FOR YOUNG CANADIAN ARCHITECTS
FOR 2012 VENICE BIENNALE IN ARCHITECTURE

Migrating Landscapes Competition

BRIEF

The Migrating Landscapes Organizer (MLO) is pleased to announce an open ideas competition for young Canadian architects and designers. This competition will be the main process for creating Canada’s official entry to the 2012 Venice Biennale in Architecture, entitled MIGRATING LANDSCAPES.

Themed around migration and cultural identity, MIGRATING LANDSCAPES examines how we as Canadians express our diverse cultural memories and the settling/unsettling dynamic of migration in contemporary settlements and/or dwellings. The competition invites young Canadian architects and designers to reflect on their migration experiences and cultural memories, and to design dwellings onto a new landscape - an exhibition infrastructure designed by MLO.

The project was inspired by the experiences of three young first generation Canadians who live in Winnipeg: Johanna Hurme (5468796 Architecture Inc., originally from Finland), Sasa Radulovic (5468796 Architecture Inc., originally from the Former Yugoslavia) and Jae-Sung Chon (University of Manitoba Faculty of Architecture, originally from South Korea). Ms. Hurme, Mr. Radulovic and Mr. Chon have joined together as a curatorial team known as the Migrating Landscapes Organizer (MLO). MLO will act as organizers and curators of the project.

The intention of this competition is to bring the Venice Biennale to Canada, by promoting and exposing the up-and-coming generation of Canadian architects and designers to the Canadian public before showcasing them in Venice. The goal is to build a young, architectural Team Canada to represent Canada in Venice.

The competition will result in regional events and exhibitions at public venues from coast to coast, culminating in a National competition and exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery in the spring of 2012, a precursor to the Biennale in Venice. This eight-month tour across Canada will be a great opportunity to identify young and diverse next generation architects and designers across the country, to generate excitement about their work and architecture culture in general, and to build relationships between various cultural, educational, institutional, corporate, and industrial communities across Canada.

The year-long competition process will consist of three consecutive stages: pre-selection, regional and national. Winners of each stage will move on to the subsequent stage.

PRE-SELECTION STAGE:
Winners of the pre-selection stage will be invited to exhibit their work at one of seven regional venues across Canada. These regional exhibitions will form the regional stage.

REGIONAL STAGE:
Winners of this regional stage will be announced at the opening of respective regional exhibitions by peer adjudication teams. Regional winners are then invited to exhibit their works at the national exhibition at the WAG (Winnipeg Art Gallery) in the spring of 2012. This exhibition will form the national stage.

NATIONAL STAGE:
Winners of this national stage, together with the MLO curators, will form a team that will represent Canada at the 13th Venice Biennale in Architecture in late summer/fall of 2012.
“Immigrants who bring new skills, innovation and creativity with them are building public markets, specialized housing developments and unconventional retail complexes that are redefining our cities. They are also influencing the development of new schools, religious buildings, community centres and sports facilities being designed to adapt to the needs of their diverse communities while remaining inclusive to all Canadians.” (Fringe Benefits, Ian Chodikoff)

“The twenty-first century is going to be remembered for the great, and final, shift of human populations out of rural, agricultural life into cities. The movement engages an unprecedented number of people, perhaps a third of the world's population, and will affect almost everyone in tangible ways. The last human movement of this size and scope, and the changes it will bring to family life, from large agrarian families to small urban ones, will put an end to the major theme of human history: continuous population growth.” (Arrival City, Doug Saunders)

“The focus is indeed not on the social or anthropological dimensions of migrations and movement, but mainly on the physical transformations they engender. Flows, migrations and encounters between different places and cultures inevitably raise architectural issues and trigger physical consequences. Such movements – forced, encouraged or desired – open up the opportunity and possibility for transformation and challenge the contemporary approach to architecture and urbanism.” (Journeys, Giovanna Borasi)

“With the gap between rich and poor increasing since the 1980s, even more with the cultural gaps between immigrant groups being exacerbated by mass migration, Americans have finally had to confront the conflict built into pluralism.” (Architecture of Fear, Nan Ellin)

Whether by force, disaster, or desire, people and products have been migrating throughout history, leaving a legacy of cultural stories at various crossroads. Contemporary migration patterns are much more complex: they have developed to become global in scope and scale, and involve diverse trajectories and forms of flow. For example, the United Nations estimates 75 million international migrants in 1965, and 140 million in 2000; the New York Times reported the dispersal of 1.3 million individuals resulting from what they refer to as ‘Katrina’s Diaspora’, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported 250,000 evacuees from the Gulf War in 1990, and 500,000 migrants resulting from recent conflicts in Libya. Advancements in transportation technology and the advent of the travel industry in the postwar era, together with ongoing political conflicts and increasing environmental devastations around the world, have forged, as Stephen Castles calls it, the ‘age of migration’. The effects of migration resonate intensely in our daily living and are widespread within the fabric of society.

Today, we sense a strange turn in this ‘age of migration’. Growing anti-immigration sentiments around the world and skepticism around multiculturalism may be signaling the closing down of the world and the faltering of pluralistic ideals. Richard Florida, in light of the 2009 Gallup poll, where 50% of Americans favoured decreased immigration, cautions future generations against this trend which will inevitably weaken social and industrial strength in contemporary society. Angela Merkel’s remarks on Germany’s failure to build “a multicultural [society] and to live side-by-side and to enjoy each other” (October 19th, 2010) denote the fragile state of multiculturalism today. Whereas ideas travel instantaneously across the world with the aid of social media, the migration of people and their values is more precarious, constantly confronted with ever-changing geo- and socio-political atmospheres.

Though the growing tide of anti-immigration sentiments and changing policies governing immigration around the world affect Canada’s cultural landscape, it remains openly committed to diversity. Canadian society may be the last of its kind, celebrating the migration of diverse values as an opportunity. As Jean Augustine states, “in a knowledge-based economy and in an increasingly competitive global marketplace every mind matters and every language in our midst is a bonus. All Canadians must have the opportunity to develop and contribute to their full potential”. While the world may be closing down, Canada can still find its unique voice within its depository of stories.

As migration becomes an increasingly contested territory, different encounters and unlikely alliances are forged. In this sense, Canada offers a unique context to explore the current condition of migration and its settling/unsettling dynamic. Migrating Landscapes seeks to map: (1) the nature of contemporary Canadian migration, and (2) our emergent stories, thus perhaps providing insight into our current and future state of pluralism.
THE COMPETITION

When people migrate, they bring with them cultural memories of a place, and unique cultural heritages, which affect one’s identity and inform one’s values. These migrated memories, either from another place or another time, transform as they settle into new contexts. New memories are forged, through processes of layering, erasure and juxtaposition, as the migrated memories negotiate with the unfamiliar in the context of new landscapes and architectural environments. In this sense, one never really settles or unsettles, and the resulting built form is neither of the former nor of the present. Instead, unique forms of un/settlement result that resonate with both local conditions and one’s own migrated cultural memories.

The Migrating Landscapes Competition invites young Canadian architects and designers to reflect on their cultural migration experiences and un/settling encounters and to design dwellings – in a sense, first acts of settlement - onto the new landscape designed by MLO. This new landscape is an abstract assembly made of wooden modules and contestants are invited to act as its first immigrants. The act of constructing the first dwellings will be enactments of first immigration onto this abstract landscape. The dwellings and the landscape will together form both the regional exhibitions and the exhibition in Venice, providing a unique view into Canada’s past, present and future.

1. CATEGORIES + ELIGIBILITY
Migrating Landscapes Competition includes two categories:

Design Entry I – Students
Students of all nationalities enrolled in Canadian post-secondary schools or Canadian students studying abroad, studying architecture or related design disciplines
Individuals or groups
1 entry per person/group

Design Entry II – Practitioners & Academics
Architects, academics and designers working in architecture-related fields
Canadian Citizens or Permanent Residents, 45 and under as of December 31, 2011
Individuals or groups (not firms)
Maximum two entries per person/group (subject to separate registration fees)

2. REQUIREMENTS

2.1 REGISTRATION
All entrants MUST register online at [www.migratinglandscapes.ca].
By registering, the entrant agrees to follow the conditions of the competition. Any entry failing to conform may be disqualified.

Online registration will open Monday, August 1st, 2011 (midnight, CST). Registration will close Monday, September 19th (midnight, CST). Upon registration, technical details of the site along with detailed COMPETITION RULES will be available for download.

Registration Fee
All entries MUST include an entry fee at the time of registration.

Design entry I (Students): $ 50 per submission
Design entry II (Practitioners & Academics): $ 100 per submission

An identification number will be issued at the time of registration. This number will be used throughout the sequential competition stages to identify selected projects. Funds collected through registration will be contributed fully to the Migrating Landscapes project.
2.2 DESIGN

Video: Narrative

A monologue video in which the entrant talks about:
His or her migration story: specific, personal instances, encounters or memories of un/settling affecting the entrant as a person and as a designer.

Intentions and ideas of the construct; specific resonances with the migration story.
The video must frame the upper body (chest and up) portion of the narrator against a white background. Entrant’s face must be screened or covered with a medium/method of choice during the narration. After the narration is finished, the entrant MUST pause five seconds and then remove the screen/cover, revealing his/her face for the final 10 seconds of the video.
Video may be a maximum of three minutes in length, including the final face reveal.

Model: Construct

A physical dwelling model that:
Reflects, represents, questions, or settles the unsettling experiences and conditions narrated in the video.
Tectonic and programmatic interpretation of and response to un/settling conditions.
Model can be constructed at any scale (e.g. 1:1, 1:10, 1:100, 1:1000).
Model MUST be portable and meet the luggage requirements of regular national and international commercial air travel (i.e.: http://www.aircanada.com/en/travelinfo/airport/baggage/).
All materials allowed but consideration of durability through trans-Atlantic travel will be necessary.

3. JURY & Technical/Curatorial Advisory

Adjudication will be done by two levels of peer Juries: Regional and National.

Regional Juries, for respective regions, (list to be announced on a later date) will assess the regional entries at the respective exhibitions and announce the regional winners. National Jury (list to be announced on a later date) will assess the projects at the national exhibition in Winnipeg, and announce the national winners.

MLO will work as the Technical/Curatorial Advisor throughout the adjudication process.

4. JUDGING CRITERIA

Architectural interpretation of the un/settling qualities within the narrative.
Resonance of the narrative in the qualities (i.e. tectonic, programmatic, material, spatial, poetic and so on) of the construct.
Relationship to the new abstract landscape designed by MLO.
Overall quality of construction.
5. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Each stage will have a different set of submission requirements and responsibilities. All submissions MUST have all three components: registration, video and model. Submission requirements for subsequent stages will be available upon completion of the previous stage. It is the sole responsibility of the entrant to read all the details of submission requirements at respective stages.

5.1 PRE-SELECTION STAGE
All submissions (across Canada) MUST BE completed ONLINE [www.migratinglandscapes.ca] by midnight (CST), October 1st, 2011.

Registration Number

Video
All videos should be uploaded to either YOUTUBE or VIMEO, and ONLY the links are to be submitted at this stage. It is the responsibility of the entrant to check the quality and functionality of their video online.

Model
At the time of ONLINE submission, up to five digital photographs of the completed model are to be submitted. Individual photographs MUST NOT exceed 2 MB. All photographs MUST be of the PHYSICAL MODEL ONLY and MUST NOT BE DIGITALLY MODIFIED. Size and orientation can be in any format.

Winners of this pre-selection stage will advance to the regional stage, and will be invited to submit their entry for a regional exhibition.

5.2 SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR SUBSEQUENT STAGES
Together with the winning notification, separate submission requirements for the Regional Exhibition, including submission of the physical model, will be issued.

6. SCHEDULE (All times are in CST: Central Standard Time)

Announcement of Venice Biennale Organizers
May 9th, 2011

Competition Launch
July 1st, 2011
Registration + Q&A begins
August 1st, 2011
Registration + Q&A closes
September 15th, 2011

Pre-Selection Online Submission deadline (across Canada)
October 1st, 2011
Announcement of Winners for Regional Exhibitions

Regional Exhibitions Submission deadline
[dates notified to winners]
Announcement of Regional Winners for National Exhibition

National Exhibition
[date notified to winners]
Announcement of National Winners for Venice Exhibition

Venice Exhibition
August ~ November, 2012

Publication of Results
[TBA]

7. RULES & REGULATIONS
Detailed rules and regulations will be available for download upon registration. It is the sole responsibility of the entrant to read and follow all the details of the RULES & REGULATIONS.