

## **Andrejsala design competition: future-focused submissions win the 1st round**

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The design competition "Andrejsala 2007", which invited submissions internationally, has announced the winners of its first round in the category of projects for benches and litterbins: Creative sitting in Andrejsala by Ilze Vanaga and Jānis Neiders, Klampp by Ilze Začeste (all from Latvia) and an untitled submission by Damien Spies (Belgium).

Valters Māziņš, chairman of the board of SIA "Jaunrīgas attīstības uzņēmums", comments: "At the conclusion of the first stage of the competition we have singled out original design proposals that will help in developing the unique features of the urban environment of Andrejsala in Rīga and make it even more visually appealing and interesting both for locals and for visitors. The authors of the three submissions judged the best will be taken to the second round, in which they will elaborate and materialise samples of their designs. After completion it will be decided whether the specially designed benches can be accepted among the various landmarks of the Andrejsala outdoor public space and remain there in the future."

The competition's evaluation panel drew attention to the winning submissions' aesthetic completeness, suitability to the present and future local atmosphere of Andrejsala, utilisation of select concepts, colours and shapes, as well as fulfilling of the functional objectives. During the second round, the contestants will be encouraged to elaborate their design ideas by concentrating on the aspects of practicality and the use of production materials. "Although the members of the panel were rather divided about the merits of some of the submissions, we were unanimous regarding the winner in the category of benches. The authors of the design have managed to capture the changing environment and come up with a harmonious proposal both for the Andrejsala surroundings of the present day, as well as for the future local environment when the territory will be converted from a port facility into a combined residential, office, arts and recreational area. I also liked the clear-cut title and precise description that accompanied the winning submission because a design product should go hand in hand with the attached text and presentation of the artist's idea," remarks architect Ieva Zībārte.

Arta Goldberga, head of the Department of Urban Environment Design of the Rīga City Building Authority, mentioned that "the submissions clearly showed that the size of objects doesn't matter. What matters is the actual approach and creativity. I graded highest those projects in which the bench was more than 'merely a stool' and instead was envisioned as one of the landmarks of the locality, a new and individual feature of the specific public space. Also among the submissions that didn't win there were proofs of a good perception of the local atmosphere combined with a high level of professionalism. For example, a lighthouse-themed project proposed to integrate a bench and a bike stand while also becoming a local design dominant and helping to organise the space."

In total, there were 26 design submissions for outdoor benches and litterbins and 9 for systems of signage and guideposts. However, the panel decided to not promote to the second round any of the works that were submitted in the category of systems of signage and guideposts.

"The rich variety of proposals demonstrates that designers recognise the value of such contests. Most of the submissions were very professional and showed the energy and industriousness of the artists. In the best submissions, there is a noticeable comprehension of the Andrejsala surroundings, which is evident from the sophisticated form and function carried by the proposed design objects," comments Inese Pētersone, project manager of "Dizaina informācijas centrs".

An exhibition of the contestants' works will run in the Main hall of the Andrejsala Hull Shop (ground floor) from the 4th to 18th of July. The second round of the competition is scheduled for the period from the 9th of July until the 14th of September, after which the final winners will be awarded during the Design Days taking place in Andrejsala in October 2007.

The experts evaluating the submissions include architect Ieva Zībārte, designer Holgers Elers, architect Uldis Lukševics, head of the Urban Environment Design Department of the Rīga City Building Authority Arta Goldberga, landscape architect Silvija Rubene, project manager of "Dizaina informācijas centrs" Inese Pētersone, chairman of the board of SIA "Jaunrīgas attīstības uzņēmums" Valters Māziņš, as well as Doctor of Arts Tuula Isohanni from the School of Visual Culture (Helsinki, Finland) and Tuuli Sotamaa, designer and head of exhibitions, University of Art and Design Helsinki.