Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation Museum: Helsinki

Open International Ideas Competition


2015 Winter/Spring ARCH 485/586, ARCH 585/586 • James Tice

Introduction
This studio will focus on the design of a new Guggenheim Museum in the South Harbour of Helsinki, Finland, the historic center of the city and a thriving urban district characterized by a wide variety of activities and places. The South Harbour is Helsinki’s marine national landscape and has functioned since the end of the 17th century as a port and quay area neighboring the city center. Today the South Harbour features public markets, plazas, parks, impressive civic buildings, modern master works by Aalto and others and a working port for ferries and cruise ships all of which tie into its expansive setting as it faces out to the Baltic Sea. The South Harbour’s strategic location, symbolic and historic significance and its continuing commercial and civic vitality underscores its centrality to the health of the city and its future development and thus provides a fitting site for the Guggenheim Museum as a major attraction and defining cultural institution. For more information, see the above link to the website.

Challenge
The challenge that faces the development of the harbor and the planned museum centers on the harbour’s dual roles: first as an honorific, symbolic and “people” center of the city with a strong focus on recreation and second as a working port with concomitant demands for services and infrastructure which support its many activities—primarily those related to the thriving cruise and ferry operations on its edges. This latter condition creates a barrier between the city and its greatest natural asset: the harbour itself. The Helsinki City Council is sponsoring an ideas competition to address this challenge. The call is for architectural design with an appropriate urban component that integrates the many different demands on the district into a coherent, sustainable urban whole.

The entrants’ task is to prepare a design for the new museum set in the South Harbour. The purpose of the ideas competition is to produce versatile and extensive documentation to be used as a basis for the actual implementation of the new Guggenheim Museum.

Fall Term
The competition entries are due approximately within a year of this presentation but the exact dates are not known (an official announcement of the program schedule is set for June 14, 2014). The studio may participate in this first design phase but students are encouraged to do so if it works within our schedule. During the Fall Term the studio will review, analyze and critique the program and its parameters. This analysis will be informal in nature and will be slated for one or more sessions; more specific information and requirements will be posted in September. Students may opt to apply for independent research credit during this phase.

Winter Term
In teams of 3 and 4 students will be asked to design a comprehensive urban design for the South Harbour as well as identifying possible design strategies. After this phase students will be asked to individually design their selected parti on its site in consultation with the critic. It is envisaged that by term’s end a preliminary architectural design will emerge which will set the stage for the more focused building design phase in the Spring Term.

Spring Term
Students will be required to develop their project in depth and at multiple scales considering aesthetic and tectonic requirements achieving a design that is both “integrative and comprehensive.”