Burano 05

CONTENTS

Illustration, cover: «Burano, 05», Birgit Cold

ARCHITECTURAL PERSUASION: ON QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN AN ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITION

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Abstract

This paper reflects on a case study dealing with the assessment of an open architectural competition. Through close observation and analysis of the jury-meetings and the competition process, knowledge is acquired about the impact of rhetoric that is used throughout the judgment process. The attempt is to clarify how a professional, fair and efficient judgment process does work, as well as how architectural quality issues are mediated.

The study shows how the entries that are *representations* of architecture including plans, drawings, texts and illustrations, are used as an instrument of visual rhetoric to mediate the competitor's visions and ideas. The jury's discussions hover between three levels of interpretation: a) the visions, b) the actual situation/problem, and c) the visualization of the proposals as they will appear in the real-life environment. Based on this complex of problems, the jury has to make an important decision, often in an emotionally charged context, to appoint a winner.

1. Introduction:

This paper reflects on a case study of the judgment process in an architectural competition. The study provides possibilities to see how the architectural qualities in the entries are identified, defined and handled. An analytic description of the evaluation is created through a critical review of the decision process as well as of the attitudes and subjects of discussions. This study ends with a model of the judgment process and in reflections on how rhetoric and basic quality issues are treated in architectural competitions.

The jury's work in an architectural competition is a discussion with many participants. It is like all discussions influenced by rhetoric, the art of convincing. The main purpose of this paper is to examine and illuminate the judgment process of an architectural competition through the acts of the jury members. How do the jury members find the most appropriate entry to win the competition with a hundred submitted proposals? What is the rhetorical impact on this process? How is a professional, fair and efficient judgment process conducted?

To illuminate the discussions, the description of the jury's judgment process as a whole is completed with a detailed description of the evaluation of two selected entries. By investigating the way the jury dealt with these two entries, an illustration of the rhetoric inherent in the process is provided.

Approaching the case

The choice to conduct a case study of the competition's judgment process was based on a need to accumulate knowledge about competitions and its design quality judgment system. The point of an *instrumental case study* is to understand a case in its context, thereby mediating an overall picture of the phenomenon (Johansson, 2002). There is little research made of architectural competitions in general and on competition jury processes in particular.

In this study, observation and documentation of the jury meetings have been the main source of data gathering. The meetings have been extensive in time, and also complex in respect of the jury-members' patterns of movement between the 97 entries. The discussions, with recurring references to the different entries, were held on different levels: sometimes formal and sometimes informal, sometimes within the whole group but also between different members of the jury group, sometimes organized and other times spontaneously. This made the use of sound recording difficult and the choice was instead to take notes in order to document the meetings. The notes comprise both the dialogues within the jury and my observations of the jury context. Written material, such as competition documents, internal communication and copies of the entries, have been used to get the context of the competition.

My presence as an observer during the jury meetings did not appear to influence the participants. To be sure of this, I avoided making evaluative remarks or statements about the entries. Also, the jury did not have any access to my notes.

Architectural competitions

From the participant's point of view, an architectural competition is a kind of *outreach work* (Bjerg, 2002). Based on the competition program, the competitors submit entries with the hopes of getting an assignment. The architectural competition system is highly respected among architects. A sign of this is the usually large amount of entries, made through many hours of work without payment, handed in to open competitions (Östman, 2005). There is a widespread belief that the competition instrument generates architecture of high quality. This is enforced by the fact that many important buildings are the results of architectural competitions. Several architects have had winning competition entries as a foundation for their careers (Kazemian, Rönn and Svensson, 2007).

In the competition regulations from the Swedish Association of Architects (SAA), a competition is defined as a situation where several participants «... simultaneously compose entries for the same task, on the basis of the same preconditions, competing for a promised assignment and/or a price sum. [...] Competitions are a sort of qualified development and inquiry work that provide alternative solutions to a given problem.[1] (*Tävlingsregler för svenska tävlingar inom*[...] 1998, 28§).

1   Translated from Swedish

Architectural competitions are usually divided in two different ways: either as competition *types*, related to the result, or as competition *forms*, related to the selection of competitors. The types can be a) a *project competition* with the purpose of realizing the winning entry or b) an *ideas competition* with the purpose of receiving different principles of solution without any promise of realization of the project. The competition forms are either a) *open*, that is, available to all participants, or b) *invited*, that is, directed towards a number of pre-selected participants (*Tävlingsregler för svenska tävlingar inom...* 1998).

Evaluating the entries

In an architectural competition a jury comprising both architects and laymen of architecture assess the entries. The jury's target is to appoint one winner and to create consensus for the decision among the jury-members (*PM arkitekttävlingar*, 2003). The process deals with the evaluation of architecture that not yet exists as built environment. The basis for the jury's judgment are *representations* of architecture consisting of illustrations in plans, sections, façades, perspective drawings, and text. A project competition is only one step in the realization process of an architectonic project, which makes the quality assessment complex and important.

Architecture is an interdisciplinary practice that requires a wide range of knowledge. A recurring concept within the evaluative discussion of architecture is «architectural quality». This concept includes technical and functional aspects as well as esthetical and socio-spatial characteristics. The technical/esthetic duality within the concept of architectural quality shows the difficulties of evaluating architecture. While the technical and functional qualities, for example the choice of materials and the organization and patterns of movement, often can be measured, the esthetic qualities are estimated by judgment (Lundequist, 1992). In an architectural competition, the technical aspect of quality assessment includes a comparison of the entries to the demands in the competition program. The jury can confer with experts to calculate the costs, measure physical properties, and check the functions, acoustics and energy efficiency. The evaluation of the esthetic aspects relies to a greater extent on the jury's interpretation of the architectonic solution and their assessments of the appearance of the building.

The competition entries are the first stage in a long process, which makes the evaluation of the technical qualities uncertain. The judgment of the esthetic qualities is complicated in another respect, partly due to the seductive presentations of the entries, and partly to the jury members' various subjective experiences and expectations of the result. In interviews concerning architectural competitions, experienced jury members pointed out that the technical and esthetic criteria are important as foundations and guides to the assessment, but the overall picture is more than the sum of its parts. One entry is rarely superior to the others in all aspects. The jury process is like a long negotiation where the members discuss the issues in order to come to an agreement to nominate the best proposal (Kazemian, Rönn and Svensson, 2005).

The graphic presentation of the competition entries, the pictures, texts and disposal of the contents, has an unavoidable impact on the judgment process. From a communicational point of view one can argue that the correspondence between reality and representations of reality used by architects in their presentations is not important. The main purpose of the representations is to mediate information to the spectator (Lethonen, 1993). The assessment of entries in an architectural competition can be seen as a search for answers to the following fundamental queries:
– What does the competitor mean? The jury has to relate to the competitor's *vision* of the project as architecture.
– How do the competitors communicate their visions? The representations give notions about the competing architect's ability to communicate.
– How will the result turn out? The jury must visualize the entries as built architecture.
– Is it good enough? The more the jury gets to know the entries, the more critical they get.

Rhetoric, the art of convincing, is usually associated with the art of speech. But all types of presentation contain purposeful and persuasive arguments (Tostrup, 1999). Rhetoric appears throughout the competition process, in the competition program, the entries and in the jury's discussions and final statement.

Tostrup identifies a threefold of rhetoric in competition architecture: (1) the design by the winning architects, (2) the graphic and visual representation and (3) the texts (Tostrup, 1999). Architects are trained to combine functions, materials and values into a holistic and conceptual design. In this process the theoretical, text-based parts of the professional task are usually given little attention (Östman, 2005). In a competition, the designers use the entries as visual rhetoric to convince the jury of his their various solutions of the competition task. To win an architectural competition, the designer has to present his or her entry in the most persuasive way by using the available means of argumentation (Tostrup, 2007). In the assessment process of the entries, the jury members use oral rhetoric to persuade each other.

The task of a competition jury is to decide of a winner, with an underlying aspiration of consensus (*PM, arkitekttävlingar,* 2003). Consensus about the decision is regarded as a guarantee of a correct decision. In a study of the way a group of experts discuss in order to make a reliable ranking of applicants of professorships in architecture, we find a situation similar to that of the jury in an architectural competition. The researchers found that a group of professional reviewers in this situation tries to establish a «structure of arguments on the understanding that it is a matter of course which alternative is the best.»[2] *(Montgomery, Hemlin and Johansson, 1990;26).* This phenomenon was labeled a *structure of dominance*[3]. The significance of this notion is that one alternative, with the advantage in a certain aspect, wins because the reviewing group eliminates the alternative in its discussion. «Decision making can not primarily be understood as comparing advantages and disadvantages, but rather as a creative process, a search for [...] a dominance structure that facilitates the defense and the ability to hold on to a decision.»[4] *(Montgomery, Hemlin and Johansson, 1990;27).* In the jury assessment of the entries in an architectural competition, the esthetic aspects of the quality assessment may create the origin of a dominance structure in the jury.

The role of the architect in a competition jury

One aspect of the judgment process concerns the relationship between the architects and the laymen of architecture in the jury. In a series of interviews with experienced members of competition juries, the informants described the jury-work as an educational process. During the assessment, the jury's knowledge about the competition task gradually deepens, and new complexities are being revealed. The architects, in their position as experts, have a pedagogical task in the jury. Due to their

2 Translated from Swedish
3 «Dominansstruktur» in Swedish

4 Translated from Swedish

professional experience in reading plans and other representations of architecture, they can guide the laymen through the entries (Kazemian, Rönn and Svensson, 2005).

Using R M. Pirsig's (1991) definition, quality is something that appears in the meeting between the subject (in this case the jury members) and the object (in this case the competition entries). The quality of an object is relative and individually oriented (Sätelää, 2007). The question is who's opinion is the most important: Is it the responsibility of the experts, in this case the architects, to decide what is good or bad architectural quality? Even though the professional knowledge of architects is a fact, some researchers indicate that architect's assessment of architecture usually is elitist. Nasar (1999) claims that architects in the competition juries direct their opinions of architecture only towards other architects. The use of competitions thereby provides architects with too much influence on the design of public places.

2. Case description

The architectural competition *A House of the Song* in Västervik was an open project competition, advertised in August 2005. Västervik is a small town on the east coast of Sweden, known for its annual song festival. The task was to design a building for cultural events on Slottsholmen, a small islet within walking distance from the town centre. The site was solitary, adjacent to water and to a ruined castle, which encouraged a building of landmark character. The program emphasized the visions of the building as «symbolic of Västervik and of the Swedish song.»[5] (Hjalmarsson, 2005). The organizer was the municipality of Västervik and a constellation body of public and private actors called VisStaden Västervik[6]. The SAA was hired to help with the carrying out of the competition, an external consultant has been hired to create competition material and do the marketing of the competition (Brunius, 2005).

5   Translated from Swedish

6   The Song-City of Västervik'

The jury comprised eight persons: four architects, two local politicians and two experts from musical arrangements and production. Of the architects, one was head of exhibitions at the Swedish Traveling Exhibitions, two were projecting architects and one was the city architect in Västervik. Of the politicians, one was head of the municipal executive committee and the other was an opposition politician, of the two experts one was the organizer of an annual song-festival in Västervik and the other had experience of stage performance and musical production. All jury members were well-merited persons within their areas of expertise though none had any extensive experience from jury work. The competition secretary from the SAA was a person with much experience of competition work. He was not part of the assessment process, but participated in the meetings as a counselor. «If I have an opinion, I'll say it» (comment, competition secretary, 7 November 2005).

According to the program the House of the Song would include exhibitions, a concert hall (the Hall of the Song), educational facilities, library, business centre, restaurants, offices, services to the harbor, recording studio and side spaces. The assessment criteria were stated in the competition program (Brunius, 2005) as:

– Practical requirements and wishes stated in the program.
– The entries' architectural qualities.
– The potentials of development within the entries.
– Economic realism.
– The criteria were relatively open and provided possibilities for the jury to decide and act.

The jugdment process

The jury needed five meetings to assess the competition entries and decide on a winner. By advice from the competition secretary, no formal notes were taken during these meetings, because notes could restrain the jury. It was regarded as important that the jury members stayed open with respect to the entries and were able to change their minds along the process (Comment, competition secretary, 7 November 2005).

Meeting 1 – The experts' sorting of the entries
7/8 November 2005

This meeting lasted for two days and only the four jury architects were present. The purpose was to make a first, preliminary, professional quality assessment of the entries. The meeting started with a discussion about the assessment process. The competition secretary stated that «the working method is to constantly reconsider. It is a mental process in every ones mind.» (Comment, 7 November 2005). The discussions initially revolved around the jury and what was expected of the architects during the next meeting. The architects' pedagogical task in the jury was regarded as important. They also agreed that an internal logic among the jury architects must be avoided, they had to be open to the knowledge and opinions of the laymen.

The competition secretary gave advice on a common crisis appearing in competition assessments: «It is not unusual that a competition jury in the middle of the process becomes doubtful if any one of the entries is good enough corresponding to the expectations reflected in the competition program. That does not necessarily mean that the entries are bad, but that the jury have gained more knowledge of the task than the competing architects. It is easier to see the deficiencies and the problems then, it is a normal condition.» (Comment, 7 November 2005).

They then chose to sort the entries on a scale of three: A, B and C where A meant «very good», B meant «approved» and C meant «not approved». The chairman suggested that everyone would circulate to get a first look at the entries.

After one hour, the group gathered again. The first discussion concerned the building site. The competition area was an ancient monument, and the built area in the entries should not infringe the borders of the building area marked in the program. Also, the jury members tried to find categories in order to sort the entries. Possible categories were the expression of the proposed buildings or their relation to the environment. They did not find any obvious classification. A quick review of the entries followed, to check if the buildings were placed inside the borders of the building area. The rest of the day was spent with individual studies. The chairman advocated the individual survey to avoid internal consensus among the architects of the jury.

The following day started with a common, quick survey of the entries. The principle was that if anyone thought an entry was approved, it remained in the competition. After the first evaluation 47 entries, of the 94 that were handed in, were categorized as «A» or «B», thereby approved by the architects at this stage.

Meeting 2 – The first selection
21/22 November 2005

Now the whole jury was gathered, even this meeting lasted two days. The chairman told the jury that his objective was that fifteen entries would remain after this meeting and all agreed. It was noted that the functions of the buildings asked for in the competition program were treated differently in the different entries. The question was how much weight the jury should put into the details. One of the architects stated that the jury had to search for architectonic quality: «The building must be worth a trip in itself. […] Architecture as the power of attraction.» (Comment, jury member, 21 November 2005). The architects put some questions to the politicians, since they represented the organizer, about their visions of the competition and about the future use of the building. Models mentioned were the Sydney Opera and the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao.

The scale was discussed as an important criterion, Västervik is a small town and there was no wish for the yearly song festival to expand. The direction of the building was also regarded as an important issue. The view to the north was not set out in the competition material and some of the competitors seemed to have misunderstood the precise location of the islet.

The laymen expressed their confidence in the architects' earlier categorization of entries, but they were also encouraged to look at the entries that were placed in the category «C» By initiative from the chairman, the jury was divided into pairs with one architect and one layman. The laymen wanted to make their first review of the entries through these pairs. In this survey, the different architects had different ways to relate: guid-

ing and explaining technical obscurities or discussing the design with evaluative opinions.

The following day the jury began with a common, quick survey of the entries. The evaluation was made by the jury members showing «thumbs up» or «thumbs down» towards the 47 entries. Nineteen entries got 'thumbs up' and were still part of the competition. Then the jury went through the entries placed in the category «C». One of these was taken back into the competition where it remained and finally got an honorable mention in the jury's report. Now the competition comprised twenty entries.

Then the jury members went through the remaining entries individually. The strategy was to choose fifteen favorite entries each. In the evaluative discussion about the selections, the following criteria appeared:
– The basic architectural ideas
– The planning
– The direction, shape and scale of the buildings
– The connection between the exterior and the interior of the buildings, or not at all
– The relation between the buildings, the water and the ruin
– The technical solutions, acoustics
– The attractiveness, the rate of excitement or dullness in the different entries, trends
– The use of the buildings, backstage areas, the design of the Hall of the Song
– Economy
– The presentations of the proposals
– The adaptation of the buildings to Västervik
– The reliability for implementation
– The rate of solution in the entries
This discussion led to the sorting out of five more entries, now fifteen entries remained until the next meeting.

Meeting 3 – The finalists appear
28 November
For this third meeting the chairman had a plan for the conduct of the review. First, the jury would discuss the fifteen remaining entries. Then, each member would select five favorites. By now every jury member would have had the possibility to study the remaining entries in detail. The jury started with a close survey of the fifteen remaining solutions. The following aspects were discussed:
– The usage of the rooms
– The planning
– The views
– The seasonal/daily changes
– The selections of material

– The architectonic expressions
– The use of light
– The constructional solutions

Since only fifteen entries remained, the discussions about each could be longer, more impartial and in-depth than before. The attitudes were still open and positive. After the joint, thorough survey, everyone in the jury was to select five favorite entries. Now the principle was a majority decision; the five most selected entries got to be the finalists. Five finalists were selected, but three additional entries also remained in the competition as «reserves». Until the next meeting experts would review the costs, the disposal of the areas and the acoustics of the five favorites.

Jury meeting 4 – The crisis
16 December 2005

By this meeting, the jury had reached a critical point. A negative attitude towards the entries was spreading among the jury members, one of the architects claimed that «None of them is really good!» (Comment, jury member, 16 November). Now the experts' opinions of the area disposal and the acoustics had arrived. The chairman suggested that they would sort out two more entries at this meeting. Until the next meeting the jury wanted to have models of the entries in order to facilitate the assessment. The municipality already owned a model of Västervik, and the jury decided that the finalists» projects would be represented by Styrofoam models inserted into the model of the town.

The chairman then initiated a thorough survey of the remaining eight entries. «Together, we study the strengths and weaknesses of five entries to eliminate the risk of leaving anything behind. We learn from the entries all along …» (Comment, jury member, 16 December 2005). The architects now gave a thorough description of the entries on demand of the laymen. The discussions became concrete and evaluative, held on the basis of the following aspects:

– The use and efficiency of the spaces
– The volumes
– The arrangement of the different activities within the building
– The pattern of movement within the building
– The assessing architects' personal opinions of the entries
– The relationship between the expressions of the buildings and the surrounding town
– The different architectural qualities of the buildings
– The design of the facades
– The views
– The degree of details presented in the entries
– The buildings' various values of attraction

The jury was suddenly divided in two groups with different preferences: on one hand the architects and on the other the laymen. This survey led to the exchange of one of the finalists in favor of one of the «reserves».

Since the economic calculation of the finalists was not finished, all five finalists remained in the competition. According to the expert's opinion of the acoustics, the sound quality in the «Hall of the Song» varied between the entries, but not enough to make some difference to the jury's assessment.

Jury meeting 5 – The decision
19 January 2006

This meeting opened in a doubtful condition. «I feel that there is no winner ...» (Comment, jury member, 19 January 2006). The question of how to act if the jury did not find a winner was posed by one of the laymen. Another worry was how to handle the possible reactions from the public; it was regarded as important that the jury supported the competition in their final opinion.

The jury started out with a review of the Styrofoam models. One by one, the volume models of the proposed buildings were put into the existing model of the town. A brand new visual opening appeared and the enthusiasm returned. Now one finalist stood out as the obvious winner. The decision was made after a review of the economic calculations of the entries, which did not contain anything definite.

Then the jury decided on the second and third price and on the honorable mentions. «Just because one entry is a potential winner, it is not obvious that it gets an honorable mention!» (Comment, jury member, 19 January 2006). The division of the price sum was also discussed. The jury decided that the money would be divided by the first, second and third price winners as 5-2-1 in order to clearly indicate the position of the winner.

3. Reflection on the process

A review of two entries' way throughout the assessment is here presented to illustrate the process. The presentation illustrates the jury's work, the relationships within the jury and the rhetorical impact on the result of the competition.
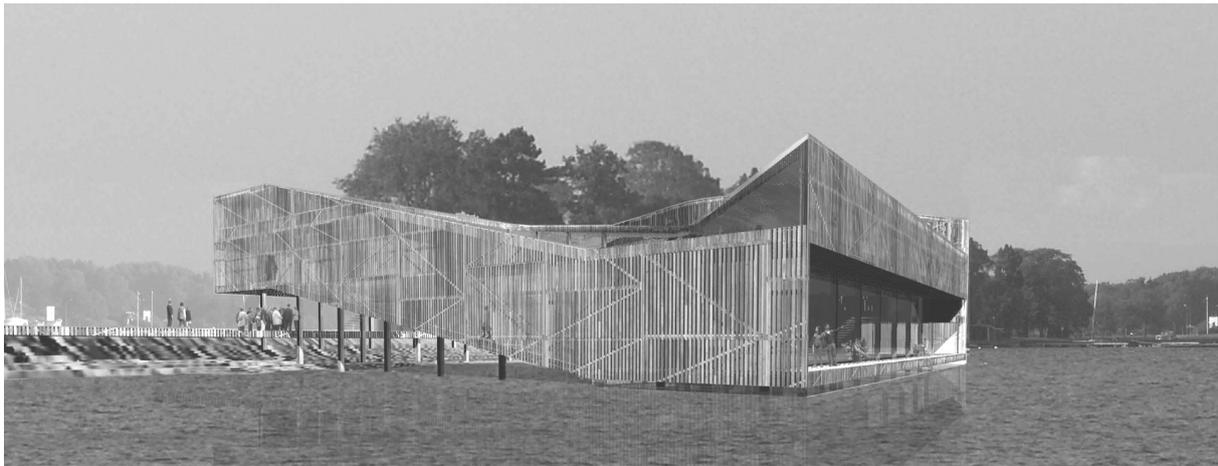
The selected entries are the winner of the competition, number 56 «Bro och brygga»[7], and one of the finalists, number 84 «Vågat vid vatten»[8]. «Bro och brygga» was liked by the whole jury and especially by the architects, but it did not appear as an obvious winner until the final assessment round. «Vågat vid vatten» was favored by the laymen, but disliked by the architects. One architect's first opinion about this entry was: «If you would make a house of music on Tivoli it is OK to do something like this...» (Comment, jury member, 7 November 2005). These two entries represent two different types of rhetoric and the jury's discussions about these become an illustration of quality assessment.

7   Brigde and jetty.

8   Daring waves.

Entry no 56: «Bro och brygga»

This is a complex building with a modernist expression. In the illustrations, the surfaces of the walls seem to consist of vertical strips of wood combined with glass. In reality, the building facades mainly consist of glass with wood strips to shade the light. The graphic presentation of the building is austere with moderate coloring. In the perspective drawings it looks monumental. There is a strong three-dimensionality within the building that complicates the planning.

Figure 1. Perspective from the entry «Bro och brygga»

The descriptive text in this entry is relatively short, poetic and conceptual: «This entry takes its starting point in the border as a phenomenon; a third place, defined as the meeting and the transition between the first and the second. Slottsholmen is the focus of several transitions: Västervik and Norrlandet, the bay and the gulf, the town and the ruin, the land and the waterfront. We can hear the song sounding from the border between culture and nature. The House of the Song adds one more transition – that between tradition and innovation...»[9] (*56: «Bro och brygga»*, 2005).

9   Translated from Swedish

It is written in Swedish with obvious Danish influences and Danish words are used for some of the drawing terms. Since one of the architects of this entry is Swedish, the Danish influence on the text might appear as rhetoric: Danish architects have in general a good reputation in Sweden. The municipality of Västervik, on the other hand, had some previous bad experiences of cooperation with Danish architects.

Entry no 84: «Vågat vid vatten!»

This entry had a strong and depictive form with facades of glass. The proposed building had the shape of two guitar bodies, one standing and one lying.

Figure 2. Perspective from the entry «Vågat vid vatten»

It was presented in a competent and pedagogical way. The text in this entry was long, well written and the competitor appeals to the marketing potential of the project with wording associated to an advertisement:

> «Even before you come to Västervik you have heard about the building that lies reflected in the water of Skeppsbrofjärden. Västervik has gained an improvement as a tourist spot. They talk about the «Bilbao-effect» [...] As popular, vulgar and poetic as the Swedish song, the building rises as a proud successor to the castle of Stegeholm.»[10] (*84: «Vågat vid vatten»,* 2005).

10 Translated from Swedish

The architects' sorting of the entries:

In the architects' first review of the entries, three of four architects allotted «Bro och brygga» (56) an A, while the fourth architect gave it a B. Thus it became one of altogether five entries in the A-category. The comments about this entry were: «hard to understand, but nice», «small-scale, many exciting rooms», «the building dips too much into the water.» (Comment, jury members, 7 November 2005).

«Vågat vid vatten» (84) was also approved in this first review with three Bs and one C. The comments on this entry were that «the shape is too obvious» and «the architect combines the ploy with a good plan» (Comment, jury member, 7 November 2005).
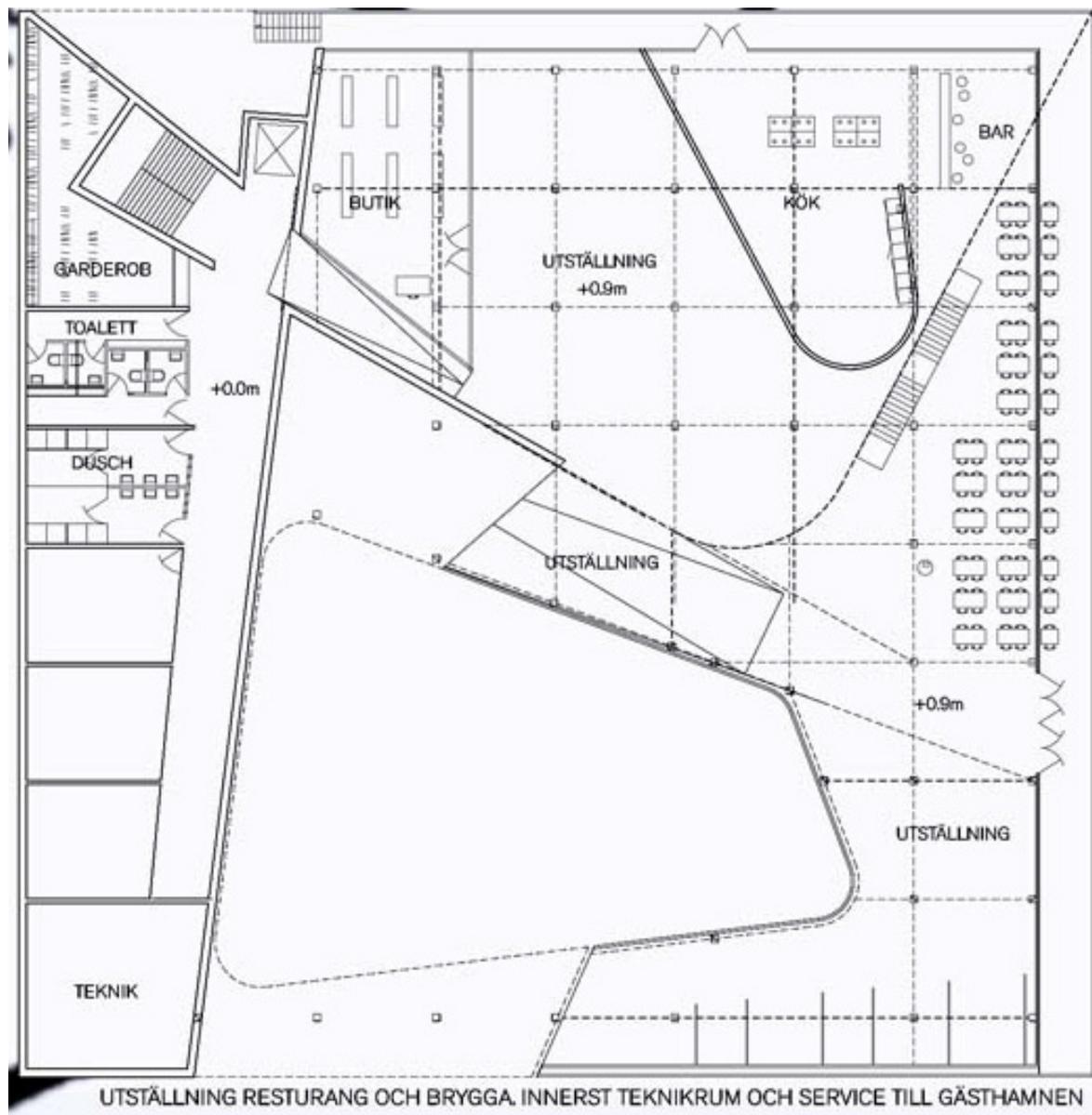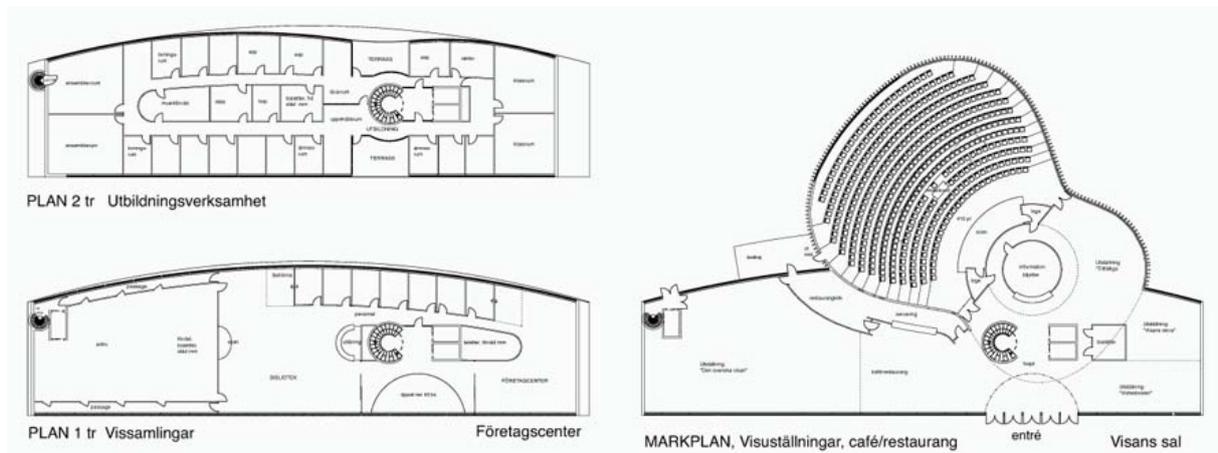
UTSTÄLLNING RESTURANG OCH BRYGGA. INNERST TEKNIKRUM OCH SERVICE TILL GÄSTHAMNEN

Figure 3. plan from the entry «Bro och brygga»

PLAN 2 tr Utbildningsverksamhet

PLAN 1 tr Vissamlingar   Företagscenter

MARKPLAN, Visuställningar, café/restaurang   Visans sal

The first selection:

The second meeting comprised two votes. In the first vote, all architects and one layman voted in favor of «Bro och brygga» (56), and all jury members voted in favor of «Vågat vid vatten» (84). Two laymen's comments about «Vågat vid vatten» were that «No one will forget that they have been there!» and «The Sydney Opera of Västervik.» (Comments, jury member, 22 November 2005).

In the next vote one layman said that «Bro och brygga' was one of his favorites. One architect stated that 'it is exciting and connects the architecture and the water ... it is interesting how the functions of the rooms come in. Beautiful.» (Comment, jury member, 21 November 2005). One layman and one architect were sceptical towards the entry, but it remained. In the discussion concerning «Vågat vid vatten», everyone except for one architect wanted it to remain in the competition. Both entries remained.

The five favorites:

By the third meeting, the laymen declared that they had problems in understanding the planning of «Bro och brygga» ...exciting, but I don't understand it' (Comment, jury member, 28 November 2005). The architects explained in positive words: «The architect creates a tension between inside and outside. Good planning, complex but simple.» (Comment, jury member, 28 November 2005). The jury studied and discussed this entry carefully. One of the members speculated about the nationality of the architects. In the final round of this meeting, six jury members - four architects and two laymen - had «Bro och brygga» among their five favorites. «Vågat vid vatten» was also the object of a thorough discussion in this meeting. The architects did become more explicitly negative towards this entry. They put emphasis on its deficiencies and uncertainties with comments like: «It is a good plan, but something is still missing.» «A bad and too obvious shape.» «The design does not correspond with the song.» (Comments, jury members, 28 November 2005). But the laymen held on to

Figure 4. Plan from the entry «Vågat vid vatten»

this entry. When each member appointed his or her five favorites, all laymen had this as one of theirs but none of the architects.

The crises:

At the fourth meeting, the architects made a thorough description of the complex connections of the rooms in «Bro och brygga». The planning got a good credit. Further, it was pointed out that the building would not appear as large in reality as it looked in the presentation. Statements about «Bro och brygga» were:

– A concert hall-like design
– Good planning
– The water takes part of the interior
– Obviously a Danish entry
– The building is understandable to the visitors
– Interesting connection of rooms
– Too much of a boathouse
– Too urban
– A strong design and a skilful managing of areas
– A basic idea that will work all the way
– It appears to be a bit unsolved
– It is nicely placed in relation to the city

In the same review, the following comments were made about «Vågat vid vatten»:

– The architects have not sufficiently solved the design problems
– The acoustics are the best in this entry
– The colored glass destroys the view
– The design does not express a pleasant feeling
– It is bad in relation to the place
– The shape is too obvious; it will not keep in the long run
– The back of the building is not solved, it is just a front
– The restaurant is wrongly placed
– It is a cool house, the coolest
– It is dull inside

Now, there was a clear difference between the architects' and the laymen's opinions of the entries. It was still uncertain which of the five finalists would win.

The desicion:

At the fifth meeting, the jury studied the models of the entries. When watching the Styrofoam model of «Bro och brygga», all the jury members' comments were enthusiastic. One of the laymen concluded that «It looks nice from everywhere, very nice, it is very much glass, isn't it? That did not appear on the plans.» (Comment, jury member, 19 January 2006). In the model study of «Vågat vid vatten», it became obvious that the building was too large for this place. By the final discussion it was clear that the model made the laymen decide to let this entry go. The

decision now became easy. «Bro och brygga» appeared as the best solution for the place and the volume studies of the other finalists did not fulfill the jury's expectations: «The entry Bro och brygga appeared as superior through its light and slightly high volume structure and by its interesting placement that enforces the relation between land and water.»[11] (Widbom et al., 2006). These arguments appeared throughout the process but it was clearly mediated by the model study. Further, the jury discussed the structure, the views and the water level in relation to the building. By the final vote, the jury agreed that «Bro och brygga» was the winner.

11 Translated from Swedish

The entry «Vågat vid vatten» did not get any price, but it was mentioned in the jury's statement: The jury has both been amused, fascinated and opposed to this entry, that cannot other than be criticized for its dominating scale.[12] (Widbom et al., 2006).

12 Ibid.

4. Discussion and conclusions

The assessment process in this competition appeared to be a gradual development of the jury's knowledge. The jury's method was a gradual sorting out of entries and an ongoing analysis of the remaining ones. By the third meeting, when fifteen entries remained, the jury's assessment got more nuanced and descriptive. The comparison of the entries' actual contents became the foundation of the discussion. After one more selection, when eight entries remained, the jury reached a critical point predicted by the competition secretary in the first meeting. Now they thought that no entry was a worthy winner of the competition.

This was an illustration of the genuine uncertainty inherent in the jury's assessment process. Even by the last meeting, the situation was unclear to the jury. Then, when the remaining entries were tried as volume models in the scale model, everything suddenly seemed to fit. One entry did rise as an obvious winner and the jury finally reached total agreement. It was the eye and the visual picture that settled the most important question of the competition: which entry has the best solution of the competition task?

The rhetorical impact

Different layers of rhetoric can be traced in the outlines of the entries. The texts were used as a source of complementing facts, with a style reminiscent of brochures and advertisements. The exemplifying entries were both skillfully disposed in pictures and graphics. The rhetoric used in the studied entries appealed to different jury members.

Among almost a hundred entries, the majority of the architects identified «Bro och brygga» as one of the four in the «A» category at the first jury meeting. But the quality in the complex design and the austere

graphic of the presentation did not appeal to the laymen. Also, the indication that the architects were Danish meant different things to the different jury members. While the architects' experiences of Danish architecture where good, the politicians' experiences of cooperating with Danish architects were bad.

«Vågat vid vatten», on the other hand, remained in the competition because it fulfilled every assessment criterion and appealed to many of the laymen in the jury. The entry remained despite its lacking adjustment to the environment. Some of the laymen, and all the politicians, were attracted by this entry. The architects made a clear presentation with an argumentative text that appealed to the laymen in the jury. The jury architects stressed the entry's difficulties with the scale on several occasions during the assessment process, but it did not persuade the laymen. Its design and rhetorical presentation made the entry a favorite among most of the laymen. Thereby, «Vågat vid vatten» made it to the finals by its successful rhetoric.

Finally, the result of this assessment did not only depend on the rhetorical impact of the entries, but also on the model study of the buildings. The winner appeared through the visual presentation of architecture where rhetoric and criterions were important, but in the end the eye settled the decision.

An assessment model

The principle of assessment until the final meeting was a gradual sorting out of the entries that did not qualify and selection of the entries considered better. The process is clearly pedagogical and investigative. The ultimate task of the jury is to find a winner. The ambition to reach consensus creates a need for a dominance structure, in order to make one entry appear as an undisputable winner.

In the discussion concerning «Bro och brygga», the architects used abstract and evaluative arguments concerning over-all structures. «The architect creates a tension between the inside and the outside. A good plan, complex but simple.» (Comment, jury member, 28 November 2005). In criticizing «Vågat vid vatten» the architects in the jury went into details in the program demands that did not appear in the discussions about «Bro och brygga». In the experts' opinion about the acoustics, «Vågat vid vatten» got a better judgment than «Bro och brygga», but this evaluation was not further discussed and it had no influence on the final decision.

An opposite relationship appeared between reason and feelings in the jury discussion. Reason can be regarded as the outspoken part of the assessment process while feeling lies in the visual part (Rönn, 2002). Experienced jury members can see the quality. The evaluative competence and

ability to observe and understand quality lies in the eye. In the case of «the House of the Song» in Västervik this relationship of oppositions appeared in the jury's assessment process and in the final conclusion. The rhetoric of the assessment lay in a conflict between reason and feelings. Judgments made on the basis of criteria reflect an intellectual consideration of the entries, a systematic means of evaluation. Feelings, on the contrary, are intuitive, quiet and immediate. The power of the visual image appeared to the jury in the final evaluation. Montgomery describes the assessment process as creative; instead of balancing positive and negative aspects the jury conducts a creative search of a dominance structure. The studied assessment process agreed with this picture. The confidence of having found a worthy winner was created in the visual experience, although it was based on the previous interpretations of the entries and evaluations based on criteria. This knowledge makes it possible for the jury to legitimize their choice of a winner and to describe the winning entry's qualities in a clarifying way in the written statement of the jury.

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Observations of the meetings of the jury meetings:
Meeting 1: At Lysingsbadet, Väster-vik, 7/8 November 2005
Meeting 2: At Lysingsbadet, Väster-vik, 21/22 November 2005.
Meeting 3: At Lysingsbadet, Väster-vik, 28 November 2005.
Meeting 4: At Wirvachs Malmgård, Stockholm, 16 December 2005.
Meeting 5: At Lysingsbadet, Väster-vik, 19 January 2006.

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