Re-Made Fabric
Garment district intervention, Chittagong, Bangladesh

Summary and appraisal by the jury

Project data

Main authors

Holcim Awards 2014 Asia Pacific

Background

Context

Client

Re-Made in Bangladesh is a research project investigating - through the deployment of architecture – the relationship between producer and consumer nations. A catalog of potential architectural interventions is offered to improve working conditions and potentially eliminate practices of labor exploitation in the garment sector, whether in Chittagong or other locations. The project seeks to enable a shift from mass production industries to forms of micro and small enterprise, with workshops distributed throughout cities rather than confining workforces in isolated factory compounds on the periphery of metropolitan centers.

Sustainability concept

Progress: Re-Made in Bangladesh (RIB) offers a catalog of simple, reproducible and adaptable architectural proposals, combining reinforced concrete structural elements with locally-sourced and affordable materials such as bamboo and mud brick. Construction is collaborative, providing sound basic structures to be “filled in” and personalized by future occupants. Architecture that facilitates a socially viable mode of production and an ethical product is thus a key brand marker.

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The jury applauds the rigor of the intellectual investigation, one substantiated by an “ethno-political” position and culminating in an architecture of “ethic-aesthetic” value. Particularly praised is the depth of the dialogue and its aim to frame architecture as an inherently political endeavor, without, however, neglecting or undermining architecture’s disciplinary frameworks. The notion of design as “manifesto” – allowing the designer to operate within, against and ultimately for a given condition – was viewed with greatest esteem and considered an essential contribution by a young team to the Holcim Awards competition, and ultimately to the advancement of the field.

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Image 1: Geopolitical and global action: a project for and with women!

Image 2: Zoom-in on the semi-rural Anwara area of Chittagong, the site of the Import/Export Fair proposal, which provides a global focus for dispersed networks of small-scale production. The architectural prototypes are designed to add density without adding to the burden of the road system. A targeted road improvement scheme is put in place, connecting existing dirt tracks.

Image 3: Diagram showing the Import/Export Fair scheme at 1:100 scale, the Import/Export Fair at 1:500, and infrasctucture intervention scheme at 1:100 scale. The Import/Export Fair is part of RIB’s micro- and macro-architectural interventions. The model workshop represents the project’s approach to urban planning. The 10 Toolhouse and Workshop models are presented to demonstrate the project’s scope.

Image 4: Further authors.

Image 5: Catalog: Text houses.

Image 6: Catalog: Toolhouse.

Image 7: Catalog: Workshop.

Image 8: Catalog: Emergency shelter.

Image 9: Catalog: Micro-architectural projects.

Image 10: A key intervention is to add density to existing road networks by reducing the need for unnecessary vehicular use, making pedestrian and bicycle circulation viable and safe.

Image 11: The Import/Export Fair is part of RIB’s micro- and macro-architectural interventions. The model workshop represents the project’s approach to urban planning. The 10 Toolhouse and Workshop models are presented to demonstrate the project’s scope.