Protective Wing
Bird sanctuary, Chiang Mai, Thailand

Sustainability concept
Progress: “Ecology Skin” integrates natural fibers into building envelopes. Palm fiber is used because of its volume and availability, insulating and moisture-retention capability, and compatibility with nature. This fiber skin protects buildings from heat, allows roots to grow, and in turn supports food regeneration for all birds in the area. Repeatedly, this architectural skin utilizes natural fiber to serve four functions: thermal insulation, acoustic barrier, food supply, and animal habitat. It can be replicated in other buildings where biodiversity and energy efficiency are desired, properties that are vital for urban environments.

People: Bird smuggling kills biodiversity. Birds are taken from the wild merely for their exotic colors and bird calls. Rescuing these birds means putting them in cages for 1-5 years as evidence during prosecution of smugglers. The Bird Sanctuary in Chiang Mai in northern Thailand serves as both an educational facility and a bird rehabilitation center including a small hotel and bird viewing towers, in a site that simulates the natural habitat. Palm fiber, an agricultural waste, is used as a construction material for the building enclosures – the façade as habitat and food source for all birds in the area.

Plan: Population growth and urban sprawl have encroached on flat terrains, leaving birds and other animals without habitat. CBS is designed to serve local communities and the bird population by reclaiming failed land parcels and reusing existing structures. In addition, palm fiber wastes are used for building enclosures since more than 3 million tons of palm fiber is discarded annually in Thailand. Its high insulation capacity, compatibility with nature, and moisture retention property make palm fiber ideal for energy efficiency and eco-friendly architecture.

Prosperity: The animal sanctuary serves a growing niche market. CBS could attract high-spending travelers who seek for eco-friendly vacations. The bird hospice and library are integrated to offer an unparalleled learning facility, giving injured birds a permanent home and becoming an important attraction for visitors. Additionally, large corporations are integrating Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in their operations. CBS could earn funding from research on solid bird rehabilitation with continual government and private sector sponsorship.

Place: Buildings of bricks and palm highlights local land, merging architecture with conservation, education, research, and eco-tourism in a complete and convincing way. Considering architecture as an instrument of “action”, the project literally establishes the link between political activism and building practice, combining architectural qualities with conservation, education, research and eco-tourism in a complete and convincing way.

Further authors
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Summary and appraisal by the jury
Each year, thousands of birds are smuggled in and out of Thailand for their exotic colors and bird calls, to be sold on the world’s growing black market. Rescued birds usually die in confinement because they are retained in cages for up to five years as evidence during prosecution of smugglers. The Bird Sanctuary in Chiang Mai in northern Thailand serves as both an educational facility and a bird rehabilitation center including a small hotel and bird viewing towers, in a site that simulates the natural habitat. Palm fiber, an agricultural waste, is used as a construction material for the building enclosures – the façade as habitat and food source for all birds in the area.

The jury greatly values the project’s political message concerning the devastating effects of bird trafficking on the survival of endangered wildlife. The author’s ideological stance aligns with the principles advocated by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), especially its “Red List of Threatened Species,” – an eminent document guiding worldwide conservation policy and action. Considering architecture as an instrument of “action”, the project literally establishes the link between political activism and building practice, combining architectural qualities with conservation, education, research and eco-tourism in a complete and convincing way.

Image 9: Site 1: Boutique hotel, transforming old tobacco-curing barns into
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Image 10: Materials and construction techniques: Soft architecture, ecology designer, designer, designer - - - -

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