La Biennale di Venezia
10. Mostra Internazionale di Architettura
september-november 2006

"Learning from cities"
International design workshop

Invited schools: Architectural Association, London; Berlage Institute, Rotterdam; Bilgi Universitesi, Istanbul; Harvard University, Cambridge; Universidad Iberoamericana, Ciudad de México; MIT, Cambridge; Cairo University, Cairo; SCI-Arc Southern California Institute of Architecture, Los Angeles; University of Patras; University of Thessaloniki; Royal College of Art, London; Tsinghua University, Beijing; Università di Camerino; Università di Ferrara; Università di Genova; Politecnico di Milano; Università di Napoli; Università di Chieti-Pescara; Università di Reggio Calabria; Università di Roma Tre; Università di Catania; Politecnico di Torino; Università IUAV di Venezia.

Special Award for schools of architecture (Cities. Architecture and society)

The Jurors, Richard Sennett (President), Amyn Aga Khan, Antony Gormley, Zaha Hadid, awarded:

I Facoltà di architettura – Politecnico di Torino
CUTTING EDGE BOMBAY

coordinator: Pierre-Alain Croset
tutors: Michele Bonino, Subhash Mukerjee
consultant: Rahul Mehrotra, Bombay
students: Tomà Berlanda, Marco Boella, Rita D'Attorre, Valeriano Foti, Manuela Martorelli, Rachele Michinelli, Marianna Nigra, Caterina Pagliara, Federica Patti, Paolo Remogna, Francesco Stassi
memento: Teresio Fantini

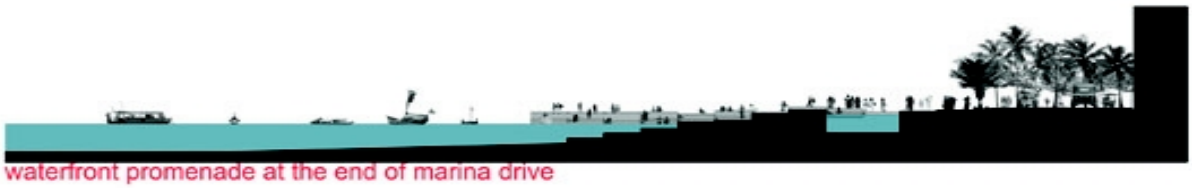
Jury's response (excerpt)
"*The Special Award for schools of architecture is given to the I Facoltà di Architettura Politecnico di Torino, for a project on Mumbai. We applaud the scholarly erudition and visual imagination of this collaborative effort of a student group in designing new housing for poor families*".
Bombay

CUTTING EDGE BOMBAY
a masterplan for Back Bay

present situation and masterplan

Bombay has always had a problematic relationship with water.
Since the XVIII century the city's growth went on through several land reclamations, that finally joined the original seven islands together. As land is added, Bombay's form is defined as a single compact body, thus losing the characteristic fragmentation of its coastline. Islands dissolve, the coastline moves West, homogeneous and compact.
Backbay is the only area where the filling in has not completely happened.
It's still unfinished and undetermined.
At Backbay's southern edge, the unfinished reclamations of Nariman Point and Cuffe Parade are still leaving a big water void, around which all the contradictions of the city reveal themselves: the aberrant densities of Nariman Point's and Cuffe Parade's high-rises need well equipped public spaces, the Koli fishing village proclaims its right of occupying the waterfront, the"informal" city grows without any facilities and fills every interstice within the city.
Around the big water void diverse social groups are near and divided, struggling every day to conquer square metres of space. Every inhabitant tries to subtract water from the sea to gain soil: the rich throw their debris after remodelling their luxurious apartments, the fishermen deposit stones in front of their piers to save dwelling and fishing zones.
Water becomes the public space, the space for the negotiation of the needs and the interests of every part of society.
Backbay is Bombay's funnel. Infrastructures are the only spaces where the rich and the poor, fishermen, managers and dabba wallahs meet and collide. Colaba Causeway and Cuffe Parade Road become the place for a forced promiscuity. The big water void can itself become a place for communications, meeting, socialization, and for exchange among different kind of transportation.
Our project states the need of mantaining this water void, redefining it in its geometry to give it a form: cutting its edges to reveal its potential as a public space.
Respecting local differences, as an alternative to the banalizing process of the land reclamations.
At an urban scale, the green spaces along the main North-South axis are reinforced. This "green spine", laid along the coastline, is equipped with a system of water tanks for collecting the rain, helping the environmental rebalance of this extremely dense area. The spine is also hosting the extreme functional mix that is typical of the Indian roads: walking, playing cricket, sleeping, running, trading, driving.
The project also tries to intensify transversal (East-West) connections, affecting the transportation systems and also introducing water channels and green space that penetrate in depth into the existing urban fabric.
Other design explorations, carried at an architectural scale such as the sections 1:200, define a precise edge between land and water.


harbour and landscaping along the new water basins


waterfront promenade at the end of marina drive


low rise high density housing on new reclamation grounds


fishermen's village and parkway