



INTERNATIONAL architecture design and curatorial COMPETITION
OPEN CALL for proposals

Launching on 28 October 2015

PHASE I DEADLINE: 12 November 2015

[re]FUNCTIONING OF “THE CULTURE QUARTET”

TIRANA, ALBANIA

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Promoters

Atelier Albania, mandated by the Office of the Prime Minister and Ministry of Culture announces an international curator competition for the revitalization and reuse of “The Culture Quartet” that is made of 4 distinguished buildings, part of the Albanian architecture and historic heritage, all located in the capital city of Tirana.

Manifesto

We are aiming at giving a chance to creating a network of spaces and programs dedicated to culture production and consumption in Tirana, a chance to making and narrating history, a chance to the past and future to melt into present, to a lot of future possibilities, as well as possible futures to find their space of expression in the art scene of Tirana. Revitalization, re-use or [re]functioning of “The Culture Quartet” is a call that needs responses.

a palace...

The Palace of Brigades situated nearby the Tirana Lake Park represents a unique Albanian chateau outlined in a rich historical background and can be considered as the most sensitive architectural site setting of the cultural quartet.

The edifice is located in the southern and south-eastern part of Tirana, once a vast natural area which nowadays turned to be swallowed by urban growth. The longevity of the program of the Palace of Brigade, initially designed to serve as the official residence of the Albanian Royal family, was relatively short. In 1937 the task of designing the Royal Palace was initially assigned to Giuglio Berté, engineer of the court of King Zogu I. During 1939-1942 it was Gherardo Bosio who completed the design of the project and envisioned a villa-type residence of Rationalist Style, which distinguishes it amongst other European Royal Palaces. Surrounded by large and unique gardens, the palace owns an assemblage of artistic interventions, mainly consisting of sculptures and bas-reliefs designed by the Italian Sculptor of the '40s, Antonio Maraini; interior furnishing by Gherardo Bosio and Gio Ponti; mosaics of Aldo Rossi and landscape design of the parks by Pietro Porchinai.

Preserving its historical traits shall be introduced by putting an end to its deterioration, through restoration and conservation of highly valuable contents of the palace, at every three levels it consists of: the exterior, the authentic interior and the grandeur garden it is surrounded by.

The intact building, offers original spaces adorned with bespoke unique furniture, a genuine interior that invites generously a wide public in the ground floor, but becomes gradually selective as going up to more intimate spaces; and so does its ability to host invitees.

The grandeur of the park pervaded from narrow paths, designed under different periods and the unique plants, lacks the infrastructural facilities to make the park usable for multiple activities independent from the palace.

The compelling need for preservation, economical self-efficiency and access to the public, defines this site as appropriate to accommodate programs that would enable the public involvement under GOA guidelines that do not affect architectural substances and can instead promote moderate commercial conversions in tune with the vulnerability of the place.

- What might be the programs that transform the palace into a focal touristic and historic point of Tirana?
- How the outdoor gardens can be integrated and intertwined with the indoor programmatic use?
- How the vision of preserving and conserving the historical line meets the urge of revitalizing and re-programming its function?
- How the proposal strategy comes up with a self-efficient internal management and its interaction with other corporations, both governmental and private sector?

a museum...

The National Historical Museum is an iconic symbol of city center, the first introduction of Albania to foreign visitors (perhaps).

The design of the National Historical Museum, the cradle of Albanian history, was assigned to a group of architects, composed of Enver Faja, Nina Shehu, Petraq Kolevica and Sokrat Mosko. The museum, a 20-meter-high volume of 90x70 meters, was conceived as a complex of three units: the Pre-war Period, the National-Liberation War Period and the Building of Socialism. The museum was firstly opened for the public in October 28, 1981. The building is distinguished for its compact volume, developed in a square plan. The architecture is designed according to the principles of socialism regime, “the windowless façade”. The spaces of the museum are organized around a central courtyard, which stays hidden from the main facades. This introverted space suggests a hermetic

expression of the building. The extruded rectangular volume, placed on top of the main entrance, displays a large mosaic entitled “The Albanians”, showing the Albanian labor force at work. Today, the museum is one of the most important landmarks of the city. Nowadays, it houses a series of pavilions, covering different historical periods of Albania: Antiquity, Medieval, National Rebirth, Iconography, Culture of Albania, Albanian Renaissance of WWII and Communist regime.

The interior of the object accommodates a dysfunctional exhibition, with vast unused spaces that yet offer a great adaptability for interior transformations. The entire structure has a great potential to be re-used, especially the ground floor which offers a common ground for temporary exhibitions. The museum needs a second thought in terms of programmatic re-use and curatorial display of the existing exhibitions; and how the interior and exterior spaces may be arranged in such way to accommodate prospective permanent and temporary exhibitions, as well as other functions. It should preserve two historical lines, within the renovation realm: the collection of the antiquity and the medieval one; and the genuine line of the ‘Albanian’ through language and cohabitation. It is the aim to generate different degrees of intensity that new exhibition concepts, pavilions and their intertwining with the current conditions, which may come together to bring a new approach towards narrative. The exercise is how to narrate a story out of history; how to display it in an eclectic way that reflects the “now” through the “past”.

- What is the curatorial program that narrates the spaces and creates an idea for an exhibition or program into a full proposal?
- How the development program will offer a new concept and logistic that surpasses the challenges of organizing exhibitions, public programs and other curatorial models?
- How the proposal fits into the program new spaces for temporary exhibitions, library, film projection etc.?

a villa...

The house of the communist dictator Enver Hoxha is located in the so called “Block” area of Tirana, once the residence area, mainly consisting of villa-type residential blocks of the ruler and members of the communist party. It was a hermetic and “ruling elite” district, where the community was prohibited to trespass. The project preserving the rationalist style characterized by socialist brutalism, pure shape, and concrete structure covered by white tiles, was designed by the Special Project Sector of the Institute of Cultural Monuments of that time.

Embodying a strong historical importance, the house, located in the former ‘silent stronghold’ and now a vibrant youthful area enriched in bars and restaurants, stands upon a new economic and

cultural landscape. Hardly touched since the family left, the Villa contains the original paintings, furniture, paintings, collection of banned books mostly in French. The Villa sits like a mausoleum in the heart of the liveliest part of Tirana- isolated from its surroundings. It is a powerful symbol of the inequality of the Communist regime.

The Villa contains a strong memory of Albania's past and its reuse presents a challenge how to acknowledge this memory, whilst looking to future possibilities and adaptations. Its position in the most economically and socially segregated area, makes the task of re-using the structure, quiet challenging.

Villa 31 holds a very strong political meaning; it strongly stands for oppression, as the former center for the dictatorship. Given the rooted political meaning it needs to offer an alternative genre of museology, one that narrates the story without glorifying 'cult of Hoxha'. The house needs to be retained without strong interventions, rather than be subject of a conceptual transformation by opening it to developments of the alternative thought. The very core of this house consists of its history. We shall not cancel the story, rather keep it fanatically. The new realm of freedom needs these spaces to be conquered in opposition with the power. The house shall not be subject of major interventions, rather than minor architectural, yet programmatic ones.

Situated in the middle of a wide garden, it offers a great opportunity to open up the ground for public use and connect it with the outside borders of the lively social life. The Villa, whilst retaining its legacy to history, will become a beacon of activities and a vital destination for the city.

- What is the program that embraces the transformation vision of the villa?
- How the proposals for adaptive re-use improve the quality of the villa and its function?
- How the alternative uses of the existing structure skip the glorification of its political meaning?
- How to integrate the garden with the new functions and how the garden may be open for public use and activities, whether temporary or permanent ones?

a league...

The former building of the "Union of Writers" is positioned along the south part of "Kavaja Road". The footprint of the building is 605m² and is located within an area of 1350m². During 1928-1929, as result of the expansion of "Kavaja Road" at the current width, it was required the demolishment the small mosque of Adem Idrizi. In 1931 it was constructed the Officers' edifice, designed by

Dhimiter Dhespoti, an engineer, part of the Albanian army during the time of King Zog I. The former Central Army House was given to the Union of Writers and since the 70s the edifice has served as refuge for the Albanian writers.

The building, since its inception, has undergone many transformations. The Council of Ministers, in 2007, decided that the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports would be transferred to the its premises and would be used in accordance to the needs. Therefore the building turned to be an institution dedicated to culture. The re-use plan displayed 4 main halls that would welcome exhibitions, talks and discussions between artists, 2 terraces so called “Lumiere Brother” and “Gjergj Fishta”. Since January 2015 the building was abandoned and it is waiting for new functions to be accommodated.

Situated nearby the city center, the vision to transform and re-use its structure, must pioneer the activation of a new socio-cultural nucleus. The upper floors, being more intimate and smaller in scale, create more private spaces; meanwhile the generous garden favors the placement of new outdoor attractions. The building characterized by different qualitative spaces: open spaces, individual rooms, lobby area, atrium; generates a structure, symbolizing a place of sharing experience, knowledge and creativity between artists, writers, musicians, architects and designers.

The garden lacks infrastructural facilities to make it usable for activities independent from the league. Yet, the garden offers the potential for developing moderate commercial attractions in tune with the vulnerability of the place.

The most compelling need is to end the deterioration of the existing conditions, provide a restoration process in which preservation and conservation of the interior shall come as a priority. The internal structure shall date back to its original form and establish a prevailing identity.

The vivid energy of art genres should submerge into a vibrant energy that brings together on a common ground the artists and the public.

- How the outdoor garden might be part of the transformation strategy and how it will be available for a larger public, might them be artists, designers etc.?
- How art-thinking can turn “the league” into a venue where cultural and artistic events may take place?
- What are the adaptive programs the edifice might accommodate?

Through this open call Atelier Albania aims to invite teams of architects and visual artists, who will generate original proposals appreciating the socio-cultural and historical context of the edifices. The

participating teams must be multi-disciplinary in order to respond to the complexity of the question(s).

Contracting Authority

National Territorial Planning Agency is the Contracting authority for this process, in the name of the Albanian Government.

Area of Competition

The edifices that are subjected of the design and curatorial call for proposals, as displayed in the competition site map, comprises the four buildings: Palace of Brigades, National Historic Museum, Villa of the ex-communist party leader, former League of Writers and Artists. The intended Cultural Quartet is located in the capital city of Tirana, within a radius of 1km.

Competition Questions

The competition will be built on these three main questions:

1. How to develop a design and curatorial concept for [re]functioning of each edifice in itself and as part of the quartet, in a way that the buildings ensure **preservation** (continuity of building use, site or landscape), **restoration** (improve the building condition capitalizing on existing infrastructure) and **refunctioning** (re-use of the historic buildings and gardens);
2. How to link all four buildings in a curatorial concept that will make them a ‘quartet’; how to come up with new program(s) that will guarantee the **activation of a new socio-cultural hub in Tirana**;
3. How to develop **flexible (temporary) programmatic spaces** that allow for diverse activities and programs in the near and far future?

Objective

The product of the competition will be a Design and Curatorial Proposal for the “Cultural Quartet”, made of four different sites within a radius of 1 km. The competition is seeking to incorporate historic preservation as a creative hands-on approach towards place making, by both strengthening the connection between community and the historic building-stock they share.

Therefore the adaptive reuse of the buildings and monuments for various functions (education, exhibition, social and community services, cultural activities) is looking forward to maximizing the shared value, particularly paying attention to the physical, cultural and social identities that define the place and its future transformations. The intervention includes rehabilitation of existing infrastructure (upgrading or provision of services when deemed necessary) and restoration of the needed components.

Adaptive re-use of the buildings need a powerful programmatic or procedural vision how they could play again an important role in civic and cultural life of Tirana. The goal would be to develop programmatic scenarios which make use of the existing spaces as much as possible and only transform them whenever the proposed strategy finds it relevant.

The adaptive re-use is seeking to create a linkage between historic preservation and conservation and the creative curatorial touch, in order to come up with a product of inexpensive and flexible spaces that can be used temporary. It is important to develop not only a spatial program (outlining the possible uses), but also an operative program, indicating how these programs would actually perform during the given time period.

Short-listed competitors are required the following:

- Study the socio-historical context of the buildings;
- Study the area of the competition and its surroundings in terms of its spatial program and socio-cultural context;
- Study particularly how the program of the building is linked with its context, ensuring a harmonious integration with the social-scape of the area;
- Propose a new programmatic use without tackling the historical and architectural values of the buildings and their landscapes;
- Introduce the gardens (courtyards) as possible intervention sites, intertwined with the indoor activities;
- Research about similar case-studies of adaptive re-use;
- Present a management plan of use and introduce ideas of Public-Private-Partnership model;
- Present an all-year-round program of activities and plan the lifetime of the proposal;
- Estimate proposal costs;
- Present an action plan;
- Present other components that will make the proposal implementable.

Methodology

Atelier Albania is a unit of the National Territorial Planning Agency, mandated to identify alternative solutions and enrich architecture and planning by thinking beyond the typical framework. In this context, we stimulate and support the participation and collaboration of different interested groups of international and local professionals who will work closely together. We believe that this team-based collaboration will improve the way projects and research is informed with all the appropriate local knowledge as well as an international level of design standards. Moreover, we want to think of competitions as co-creative processes, where designers and local actors are involved in an interactive problem solving process.

Expected Results

PHASE 1: at this stage of short – listing, the candidates will present themselves by illustrating their capabilities, methodology and vision for the given subject and theme. Each submission will be reviewed carefully by members of the jury and the best teams will be selected based on qualification and evaluation criteria. These criteria are given below.

The jury will short - list the teams that comply with the qualification and evaluation criteria. These teams will be called to continue their work on a second phase. They will work to deliver a concept according to this brief's general objectives and questions. Second phase or stage will be also based on elaborate information and brief that only the short-listed competitors will receive from the organizers.

PHASE 2: at the stage of “Design and Curatorial Proposal”, each group of applicants will be carefully reviewed by members of the jury and, based on the criteria of evaluation of Phase 2, a winning proposal will be selected. However the jury's duty does not end with the selection of the winning team and proposal. Local members of the jury and international members with professional experience in Albania will cooperate in creating a constant spirit of instructional leadership for the winning team. After the competition the team will have the opportunity to meet with the jury members to discuss their attitude, choices and the impact of the project. The team should agree to stay open-minded towards the adoption of the proposal with potential contextual situations, which might not have been known before. The jury will play the role of an advisor for the winning team, but also the role of a partner for the client in order to help it achieve a harmonized design and curatorial project, which will have the support of different local stakeholders and will ensure direct impact in the intervention area.

Teams of Local and Foreign Professionals

Every international participant is encouraged to partner with local eligible professionals and each local participant is encouraged to partner with international eligible professionals.

The client believes that such cooperation can increase the impact of the proposal and improve the quality of implementation. In applying for the first phase it is not a pre-selection criterion to have a local or international partner; having a partnership at this stage however is positive and can help to create a more coherent and contextualized vision which of course might boost the teams' chances of selection.

Suitability

The competition is open to all professional architects, visual artists or visual art teams that are able to meet the following requirements.

1. Be registered or recognized by an official accreditation body in the country of origin of the applicant; or
2. Where recognition or registration law does not apply, the applicant is a member of a professional institution, the country of origin.

All applicants must provide proof of the validity of professional registration, recognition or membership in the Team Composition Declaration.

Each team should be composed of at least:

Either

- Architect – TEAM LEADER
- Restoration expert – consultant
- Installation artist/ visual artist – consultant
- Historian – consultant
- Curator – consultant

Or

- Curator – TEAM LEADER
- Architect – consultant
- Restoration expert – consultant
- Installation artist/ visual artist – consultant
- Historian – consultant

All team members must be identified in the Declaration of Team Composition.

Details about suitability are given at addendum nr.6 of the Standard Tender Document. STD can be downloaded at www.app.gov.al.

Application Documents

Entrants must submit a number of documents, in order to be in compliance with the requirements of the competition for the first and second phase of the contest.

Documents Phase 1:

- Declaration of Team Composition,
- Primary Staff CVs (architect, restoration expert, installation artist/ visual artist, historian and a curator)
- Methodology,
- Vision Statement
- All other documents relevant to application according to the Agency for Public Procurements

Details about suitability are given at addendum nr.6 of the STD.

Documents Phase 2:

- Design and Curatorial Proposal

Selection Criteria

The jury will select the applicants of the first phase based on these initial qualification criteria:

- Clarity and fulfilment of the required documents for Phase 1
- Professional composition of the team (architect, restoration expert, installation artist/ visual artist, historian and a curator)
- Similar experience of the team and its main members
- Clarity and efficiency of the proposed methodology
- Relevance of what is proposed to the scope of the competition and issues of the site

Details about suitability are given at addendum nr.6 of the STD.

Evaluation Criteria

The jury will evaluate the applications of Phase 2 based on the following criteria:

- Creativity
- High implementation factor of the design and curatorial proposal
- Links and impact of the proposal to the context (building and city)
- The cost-impact ratio (low cost, high impact)
- Strength of the curatorial proposal in the context of the culture quartet
- Other criteria that jury members will elaborate during jury deliberation

Final Product

The competition will end with the selection of a well-equipped team, who will be able to engage in the post-competition process.

The winning team will be engaged in the next phase, which consists in the preparation of execution design and curatorial proposal based on the winning proposal.

Post-Competition Process

To coordinate better the work between the winning team and the client of the project, organizers anticipate the first meeting between the team, the client and local stakeholders during the process of elaborating the project proposal. The underlining reason is to bring together the design and curatorial team and all the stakeholders and to share among them ideas, proposals and suggestions. This meeting will be conducted in Tirana.

Competition Awards

There will be **four awards**: one for each building of the ‘Culture Quartet’.

Best proposal for ‘**Palace of Brigades**’: 18,000 Euro.

Best proposal for ‘**the Villa**’: 18,000 Euro.

Best proposal for ‘**National Historic Museum**’: 18,000 Euro.

Best proposal for ‘**ex-League of Writers and Artists**’: 18,000 Euro.

The winning team(s) will begin contract negotiations with the Client for an agreement to prepare the execution design and curatorial project based on the winning proposals for each of the buildings.

COMPETITION PLATFORM

Competition Type:	Design and Curatorial Competition with a Shortlist
Phase I:	Open Call for Interest
Phase I Requirements:	As PER Addendum No.6 of the Standard Tendering
Advantage Criteria:	Local-Foreign partnership
Jury Evaluation:	Short Listed Teams
Phase 2 :	Design and Curatorial Proposal
Phase 2 Requirements	Submission of 'Design and Curatorial Proposal'
In-Between Phase:	Site visit and workshop with local stakeholders
Jury Evaluation:	Best 'Design and Curatorial Proposal' for each building
Prizes:	Prize of the winners: Palace of Brigades: 18,000 Euro National Historic Museum: 18,000 Euro Ex-League of Writers and Artists: 18.000 Euro The Villa: 18,000 Euro and Contract Negotiation for Detailed 'Design and Curatorial Project' for each building

COMPETITION CALENDAR

Open call for interest:	28 October
Phase 1 Deadline:	12 November, 10.00 (local time)
Short-listing Announcement:	16 November
'Design and Curatorial Proposal' Official Invitation:	23 November
Preparation of 'Design and Curatorial Proposal':	16 November – 14 December
Workshop in Tirana: SAVE THE DATE!	27 November
Finalization of Brief and any further planning:	23 November
Phase 2 Deadline:	14 December, 16.00 (local time)
Public Exhibition/Presentation of 'Design and Curatorial Proposals':	15 - 16 December
Jury Evaluation:	16 December
Announcement of Results:	16 December 2015

POST COMPETITION 2016

Detailed 'Design and Curatorial Project' Contract Negotiation:	January-February 2016
Contract Signing for Detailed 'Design and Curatorial Project':	February 2016
Detailed 'Design and Curatorial Project' Submission:	2016
Implementation of Detailed 'Design and Curatorial Project':	2016 - 2017

PROCUREMENT INFORMATION

Short listing phase will be conducted via electronic system to website: www.app.gov.al

Tender documents may be obtained electronically in the same website: www.app.gov.al

Foreign competitors, in order to use electronic procurement system should register on-line as an economic operator website: <https://www.app.gov.al/ep/Registration.aspx>

Further instructions for international competitors may be obtained from the user manual "EPS user manual - Economic Operators", which can be downloaded from the webpage www.app.gov.al

FURTHER INFORMATION

Each of the Terms of Reference can be found on the official website of the organizer of the competition:

<http://www.planifikimi.gov.al>

Or, in the pages dedicated to these competitions:

<http://competitions.planifikimi.gov.al/CULTUREQUARTET/>

You can also contact us at:

AtelierAlbaniaCompetitions@planifikimi.gov.al

Information regarding procurement procedure should be asked through electronic procurement system.