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PRESS RELEASE

SPACE GROUP AND BRISAC GONZALEZ WIN COMPETITION FOR CULTURE AND OPERA HOUSE IN NORWAY.



A consortium comprising Oslo based Space Group and Brisac Gonzalez has won joint first winner in a shortlisted competition for the design of the new opera and culture in Kristiansund, Norway. The 15 000 m2 project consists a 600 seat auditorium, library, symphony rehearsals, ballet centre, restaurants, youth centre and educational centre.

From a long list of thirty seven, five teams were shortlisted for the competition including Snøhetta and Gert Wingårdh.

The architects' team include structural engineer - Adams Kara Taylor, civil engineer - Norconsult, environmental engineer - Atelier 10, theatre consultant - Ducks Sceno, acoustics - Sund & Thomassen.

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The New Opera and culture house amalgamates opera, library, school, cultural facilities, and youth center. The complex represents culture in its most pervasive and innovative form. To create spaces for the unexpected, spaces to inspire us, spaces where the collective and individual can coexist, to inspire experimentation, invention, heterogeneity and freedom is to *liberate culture*.

SITE

There are already two significant buildings on the site – a 19th century school building and an early 20th century Folkets Hus (People's House). To engulf them by a third larger building would diminish their integrity. The design strategy creates a porous cultural compound of three very different free standing buildings that are autonomous yet connected. The two existing buildings will be fully refurbished and filled with a host of new activities. A ribbon-like glass bridge that doubles as exhibition gallery connects the library in the Folkets Hus to the main foyer of the new building. The school building will contain youth cultural activities. An underground passage will link it to the stage level of the new auditorium.

RED CARPET

Inside the new building the public circulation route serves as collective space open for an array of speculative activities. A procession of movement from entry to restaurant, via the red carpeted circuit that weaves its way through the building, reveals at once both the rich interior setting and views of Kristiansund.

THE HALL

The objective for the auditorium is simple: allow for the greatest number of guests to be as close as possible to the stage. From the stage, the performers will see an ocean of people, wall-to-wall. The multi-purpose hall, driven by the demand for flexibility, is often the victim to the paradoxes of big-small, invisible-exposed, functional-beautiful. The design of this hall is one where flexibility exists without succumbing to the generic.

ROOM WITH A VIEW

On the top floor of the new building restaurant, canteen and orchestra rehearsal room can be combined to create a very large room with spectacular views. An expansive exterior terrace adds greater flexibility in a setting where different scenarios, be they planned, impromptu, or incidental can occur.

FACADE

The façade of the new building is curtain-like, selectively revealing the activities within. From the exterior, the perception is of a soft dress, covered in small reflective sequins, shimmering, constantly changing, and flowing. From the inside, the lighting varies from translucent to transparent, providing an even light throughout the building.

Edgar Gonzalez, of Brisac Gonzalez, said: 'It is an extremely interesting project not only from the wide range of activities in new and existing structures, but from the nature of a very unique collaboration with our Norwegian colleagues. I look forward to be working on another Scandinavian project. We have already built in Sweden. At present we are also working on a feasibility study for the Museum of Copenhagen in the historic centre of the Danish capital.'

Space Group partner Gary Bates, said: 'The merger of activities in the Kristiansund Opera and culture house represents culture at its most radical and innovative. We are delighted to have won, and look forward to realizing our dreams for this project.'

For further information and images, please contact: Brisac Gonzalez 020 7378 7787
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Notes to Editors

Brisac Gonzalez

Brisac Gonzalez is an award-winning international architectural practice based in London. Recent and current projects include: a sports hall that is under construction in central Paris, an 11,000m² music school and performance hall in the south of France. In Scandinavia, the practice is working on a feasibility study for the Museum of Copenhagen for its new premises within the 8 000m² historically significant Christian IV that dates back to 1608. Brisac Gonzalez has recently been shortlisted for a mixed-use facility including 100 housing units in the 11th arrondissement of Paris.

Space Group

Space Group (Established 1999, Oslo), is an award-winning network-based architectural and design office - with a broad international expertise that confronts all projects whether large and small projects with the same ambition: to be strategic and innovative, flexible and direct. Ongoing projects in Norway include: Oslo Central Station, 80,000 m² including new train station, hotel, offices and shopping. In Trondheim, a new conference centre and hotel (under construction) with 400 room and conference centre with 1400 seat capacity. In Bodø is the construction of the new headquarters for the Civil Aviation Authority started.

The office is headed by three partners: Gro Bonesmo, Adam Kurdahl and Gary Bates.

Kristiansund

The city of 23,000 inhabitants is built on 5 linked islands and has the same density as the Norwegian capital Oslo. It is probably best known for having Norway's oldest opera house, an Art Nouveau-style building that was finished in 1914. Historically, Kristiansund has been the most important Norwegian city in the dried -cod trade. Due to the city's heavy involvement in fish processing and international shipping, there used to be as many as seven consulates in Kristiansund, mainly from Latin countries. Kristiansund today is Norway's second most important oil and natural gas city.



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