



The architect of the building complex of the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw and TR Warszawa Theatre in Plan Defilad has been selected!

Warsaw , 31 July 2014

The Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, in cooperation with TR Warszawa Theatre, have completed the tender proceeding launched in September 2013 for the selection of the architect of the future building complex housing the two institutions on Defilad Square, at the foot of the Palace of Culture and Science.

The complex, composed of the building of the Museum, the space of which is 15 000 sq. metres, as well as the building of the Theatre with a space of approx. 10 000 sq. metres, connected by means of a roofed city square – the first of such type in Warsaw, will be designed by the architectural firm Thomas Phifer and Partners from New York.

At the end of the two-stage selection process, 12 bids presented by 12 architect studios have been submitted, following a series of consultation meetings and negotiations by the representatives of the Museum and the Theatre with the bidders. In assessing the different proposals, the Selection Committee followed a list of criteria, with particular focus placed on the architect's understanding of the urban context of the two buildings, seeing that the concept proposed should invigorate this part of Warsaw, merging the functions of the two institutions with the daily life of the thousands of locals and visitors, opening up art to the city, and opening up the city to art. In order to assist the bidding architects, the two institutions had prepared the so called functional plan – a very detailed document which, on the one hand served as a manifesto stating the missions of the Museum and the Theatre towards the city, its inhabitants, and towards art and, on the other, it constituted a very precise list of needs and expectations. The functional programme was later made more specific as a result of the talks with the bidders, so that it finally became a document on the basis of which the architect studios could develop their proposals, and which, to an effect, served as a summary of the needs of contemporary Warsaw.

In its assessment, the Selection Committee came to the conclusion that the studio which presented the best understanding on the functional programme of the Museum and the Theatre was that of Thomas Phifer and Partners from New York. It is this proposal that proved to be the most pro-urban and it is with this architect that the Museum shall conclude a contract for the design of the Museum and Theatre complex. The collaboration, which is to begin as early as September this year, will involve the further development - together of the Museum and the

Theatre - of the present initial concept and, later, the creation of the building design, followed by oversight and supervision of the project's delivery.

There were two conditions necessary for the Museum and Theatre to not only enjoy a fruitful cooperation with the architect, but for it to be at all possible: the ownership title to the land and a confirmed financing of the project. Fortunately, both requirements have been successfully met in recent months - on 4 July 2014, the Museum and the Theatre became the owners of the land being the site of the future construction and, furthermore, the Theatre has received funding from the city budget, while the Museum has been granted the necessary guarantees needed to obtain an investment loan, as it had been planned in agreement with the city authorities, as well as the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. The whole design process will be carried out jointly by the Museum and the Theatre, until the completion of the execution design. The investment process, which is to follow that stage, will then be managed by the two institutions separately. The budget for the design and construction of the Museum part is 270 million PLN without furniture and equipment, The construction of the Theatre will be co-financed from European funds, and the cost is estimated at 125 million PLN, without furniture and equipment. According to the agreed timetable, the design process will be completed by mid-2016, and the entire complex is to be built by the end of 2019.

Embarking on this joint project with the selected architect, both the Museum and the Theatre are convinced that thanks to the proposed concept, the architect's vision, as well as the entire experience gathered thus far, it will finally be possible to create a complex of edifices which will transform the barren and unfriendly area in the very heart of the country into a vibrant space pulsating with culture and the everyday hustle and bustle of a big city, meeting the needs and expectations that Poles have of their capital in the third decade of the country's independence and the second decade of the 21st century.

The buildings, though partly connected at the underground level, will be separate: the Museum is to be located in the eastern part of the plot of land, along Marszałkowska Street, while the Theatre is to occupy the western side, in the vicinity of the right wing of the Palace of Culture. At the heart of the entire complex lies a roofed city square, linking the two institutions with public space and with each other, but also serving as a pedestrian passage between the Świętokrzyski Park (and the Świętokrzyska metro station) and Defilad Square with the Palace of Culture. The multifunctional space of the square is to be the venue of public art projects, concerts or outdoor performances but, first and foremost, a place of free social interaction. The space between the Museum and the Theatre is to be at a human scale, a smooth transition between the monumental Defilad Square and the tree-covered Świętokrzyski Park, between the exterior of the buildings and their interiors. Since the architect is also required to propose a general concept of the Defilad Square and the park adjacent to the Museum and Theatre complex, the two institutions are planning, together with the architect, to conduct public consultations regarding the possible scenarios of the use of the surrounding space.

In his design, the architect has followed the motto that it is "a building that reveals all it has". According to this concept proposed by Thomas Phifer, if the two institutions are about showing – visual and performative art – their architecture should reflect this principle and reveal to the passers-by, the thousands of random pedestrians, what is happening inside. In the case of TR Warszawa Theatre, one of the biggest attractions will be one of the stages opened up to the Defilad Square, where the activities on stage will be watched from the inside, but also from the outside. The surroundings of the building will therefore be either a stage set or the auditorium. Furthermore, some of the rehearsal spaces on the side of the Theatre and the backspace of the Museum will have glass walls, so that the institutions can look at each other and at the people outside, in the square, in the park, or on the higher floors of the two buildings. The architect is very keen to make use of natural light, which is extremely important particularly for the exhibition

space of the Museum. Thomas Phifer's architecture is light and open and as such it positively influences the social perception. He describes his architecture as optimistic, built with light and accessible.

By means of the values the planned buildings communicate and the attitudes they reinforce, they will stand in stark contrast to the monumental character and the architectural vanity of the neighbouring Palace of Culture. The architect's understanding of such ideas as openness, transparency, as well as the convincing simplicity of the solutions proposed, give hope that these buildings - so long awaited - once their construction is completed, will become the symbol of contemporary Warsaw.

Participating offices:

- 1. BLOND&ROUX architectes [France],**
- 2. Fiszer Atelier 41 Warszawa [Poland],**
- 3. Foster + Partners Limited [United Kingdom],**
- 4. Inżbud Tomasz Trepka: arch. Andrzej Kadłuczka, arch. Krzysztof Barysz, arch. Piotr Obracaj [Poland],**
- 5. JSK Architekci / nsMoonStudio [Poland],**
- 6. Biuro Architektoniczne Kaczmarczyk: arch. Andrzej Kaczmarczyk, arch. Sylwia Bartoszewska, arch. Joanna Żabińska [Poland],**
- 7. Henning Larsen Architects [Denmark],**
- 8. PAS PROJEKT ARCHI STUDIO Sławomir Golenko [Poland],**
- 9. Thomas Phifer and Partners [United States of America],**
- 10. PROCHEM: arch. Jacek Jedynak, arch. Andrzej Maślowski, arch. Andrzej Kikowski [Poland],**
- 11. UNStudio [The Netherlands],**
- 12. WXCA/WXCA Group [Poland].**

Selection Committee:

Miroslaw Bałka – artist, **Wojciech Gorczyca** – director of the TR Warszawa theatre, **Jerzy Grochulski** – architect, **Tomasz Thun-Janowski** – director of the Culture Department of the Municipality of Warsaw, **Wojciech Kwiatkowski** – director of the Financial Department of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, **Marek Mikos** – director of the Architecture and Planning Department of the Municipality of Warsaw, **Maciej Miłobędzki** – architect, **Mikołaj Mundzik** – architect representing the museum, **Krzysztof Nowakowski** – president of the Friends of Museum, member of the Museum Board, **Grzegorz Piątek** – architecture critic, **Ewa P. Porębska** – architect, editor-in-chief of the Architektura-Murator monthly magazine, **Michał Rudnicki** – architect representing the theatre, **Magdalena Staniszko** – architect, **Tomasz Galik** – secretary of the Committee.

Contracting Authority: **Joanna Mytkowska** – director of the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw