

The second prize was given to Dan Zur Associates and Studio de Lange, Israel, and the third prize to Benz Kotzen, Sustainable Landscape Architecture London, the United Kingdom, and to Bruce Levine Architects in association with Vered Zutz and Mira Maylor from Israel.

From the distance, Hiriya appears as the mystic mountain in the midst of the spacious Ayalon plain. This Genius Loci should be preserved by all means.

Peter Latz recognized that the complexity of the project lies in how the visitor experiences the site. The first experience is from a distance: the mountain, seen from a distance is actually perceived of as an object, as a large, magical and sculptural form rising from the surrounding plateau, and changing shape as one encircles it or views it from a distance. He described the mountain in these words: "From the distance, Hiriya appears as the mystic mountain in the midst of the spacious Ayalon plain. This Genius Loci should be preserved by all means."

The second experience for the visitor occurs when he is at the site or on top of it. There he per-

ceives Hiriya as "a system of information layers" which operate independently and should not be unified in a design. These layers should be described in a new language; they are comprised of the following elements: two narrow river bends curving around the mountain and deeply cutting into the ground plane, the sheer profile of the mountain and the plateau, primarily a desert, and a "valley which leads the visitor to a very special space at its center".

Latz describes a particular sequence, change in scale and change in the landscape which the visitor will consciously experience: "We will try to retain the complexity of information as much as possible. Step by step the mountain will become a landscape – an open and public Mediterranean cultural scene, dry in the summer and full of beautiful flowers in spring, with a fountain at its core as a symbol of nature."

The sequence outlined by Peter Latz is comprised of numerous components. The "Wadi", transforms the riverbanks of Shapirim and Ayalon. It is extremely important for preserving the form of the mountain and providing flood protection. The "Foot Terrace", composed of six million cubic meters of debris, helps to stabilize the sensitive base of the steep slopes. The terrace will be covered with material excavated from the

Wadi, and include fruit-bearing trees, flowering meadows, picnic areas, sports facilities and playgrounds. The steep slopes grow up out of the foot terrace. It is important that the slopes retain their fascinating shape and gradually become green. Above, the sparse vegetation on the plateau continues down the slope retaining the silhouette of the mountain. The plateau will be covered by different protective layers – a layer for water retention and one of vegetation, which will prevent methane emission and seepage of water into the mountain. The plateau will be the highest level of the terraced inner core of Hiriya.

The inner core is an oasis with a secret garden. It is an autonomous landscape with no reference in scale to outlying areas. It will be maintained more intensively than other areas of the site and irrigated with rainwater collected from the large plateau and water from the recycling park. Here even tropical vegetation will be possible by installing a special system for underground water retention. A shady pergola built on an existing concrete foundation and covered with flowering vines could be one of the first interesting features for the visitor.

Detailed planning is now in progress. Hopefully the project will be realized within the next few years, depending on availability of funds.



The slopes rise steeply from the "Foot Terrace". A secret garden is nestled in the center of the mountain, where lush vegetation provides shade.

Mesa Arts Center, Arizona

Like many other cities in the United States, Mesa was lacking a center. Now, the Mesa Arts and Entertainment Center is to function as the new heart of the city. It creates a new image and a destination-place for residents and visitors.

There is much talk in the urban planning community of the value of sustainability as we build and rebuild our cities. However, the tendency, at least in the US, is to talk about sustainability solely as it relates to environmentalism. What these discussions overlook is the fact that sustainability is a four-pronged issue. When assessing the sustainability of a place, the most successful solutions are those that address its physical, environmental, economical, and social compartments. Only when we address all of these issues can we truly create a sense of place and pride in our urban spaces. That is how we build sustainable cities and societies.

A few years ago our firm, Martha Schwartz, Inc., welcomed the challenge of designing the landscape for the Mesa Arts Center in Mesa, Arizona. Mesa, for all intents and purposes, a "proto" Phoenix, is a rapidly developing "sprawl" without a centre, or any identity. This is a scene we encounter all too often in the US.

Mesa had previously lived without a central core. There was no destination-place for residents and visitors. The city leaders fortunately realized that, in order to retain a population and attract future inhabitants, Mesa had to reinvent and brand itself through substantial urban regeneration. For this regeneration effort, Martha Schwartz Inc. teamed with BOORA Architects of Portland, Oregon. The master planning for this project was done through a close, collaborative process, between architect and landscape architect. Our team was directed to create a visually and socially appealing city centre in Mesa, Arizona. The site was to contain three performing arts theatres of varying sizes, a community art gallery, and a school.

What we jointly developed, after exploring at least a dozen different schemes, was a "geode" for the city, a central framework with a defined, solid exterior, containing a magical gem as its inner space. This structure



Blue glass gravel highlights a boutique display of desert plants at Mesa Arts and Entertainment Center.

The Red Shadow Garden creates interestingly shaped shadows of organ pipe cacti on a red wall.



was to provide a street wall for a city that had a lack of density and was in need of spatial definition. What resulted was a block of development that created a street wall along both Main and Center Street thereby establishing urban density. This block was then “carved”, or “cracked” to create an elaborated passageway with a civic space that functioned as a street and entry spaces for the three theatres.

The Mesa Arts Center is literally at the central axis of the city. It is at the crux of Mesa’s two main roads, Main and Center Street. The block functions as a meeting point for all four corners of the city. We were presented with an incredibly large main block, measuring 600 feet x 600 feet, with tremendously wide streets (100 feet wide enabling a cart driven by a team of oxen to make a U-turn). Through our designs we sought to create a lively, highly imageable destination centre while linking the previously disconnected city regions.

This passageway evolved into a “Shadow Walk”, a grand promenade that runs through the building complex in a bold, arching gesture. The bright sun of the southwest is the single most defining environmental characteristic, and the resulting shadows became the fundamental element of design. The concept was to display plantings in a way that would best dramatize their shadow patterns, also creating spaces that would be comfortable for people. The planting, like the performers on the three stages of the Center, would thereby actively participate in the drama of the space. Our “Shadow Walk” provides opportunities for both large and small group gatherings, performances, art exhibits, smaller “parklets” for quiet relaxation and water features for enjoyment. A rich interplay of overlapping shadows, trees and architectural canopies create a cool and inviting environment.

Paralleling the Shadow Walk is the “Arroyo”, a water feature whose narrative is appropriate to the southwest: a boulder-filled ditch, made of steps of cut stone and lava rock, runs along the western side of the Shadow Walk for its entire length. At the head of the “Arroyo” is a stainless steel cloud that “rains” into a basin. When the basin fills, the water is released, creating a strong pulse that will rush through the riverbed from north to



After exploring almost a dozen schemes, this design was the one that created the “geode” within the city, a haven from the world that was still very accessible to the public.