

Bolond lyukbol, bolond szélfuj

- Hungarian for “from a crazy hole,
“blows a crazy wind

editorial

Sitting in the boat, winter sun above, below - quiet waters heralding the coming storm. A light breeze cools the gnawing concern, nothing happens just like that. There's a bridge over troubled water, promised Paul, and Art with the Garfunkel in his throat said he doesn't give a damn about all the bloated critics. In the background Leonard Cohen is crooning “There is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in”. The next song is Arik Einstein's “You and I will change the world”, and I reminisce that “like seeing what I feel like” - you, my dear reader.

Next to me - Arad and Sharon, and thoughts about what was once the oldest and most beautiful profession in the world. On the other side, wobbling against the back wind are my long-time friends - Baruch and Osvaldo, and between them thousands of AI subscribers - each aspiring to be a Zaha, Koolhaas or even Ada.

I'm speaking of course about the discriminative competition for the National Library in Jerusalem, that managed to turn “entrepreneurs' choices” competitions into something to yearn for. Organized by the Yad Hanadiv Foundation, the enterprise offered architects to compete among themselves, for the right to compete against nine invited competitors - four from Israel, four from abroad, and one that hasn't been decided.

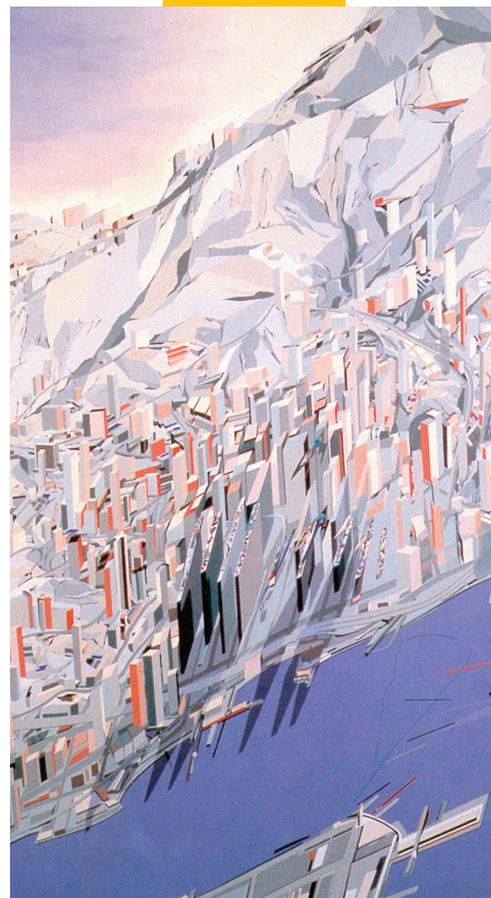
Architecture competitions, we have written here before - are our “American Idol”. Through them we often have the opportunity to discover young unknown forces, who - when winning - are launched for life. I'm sure everyone knows who Moshe Safdie is, but not sure everyone knows that he became Safdie through an open competition that brought him, and us, Habitat. Who hasn't heard of Centre Pompidou that revealed Richard Rogers and Renzo Piano; the competition for the Opera House in Cardiff that made Zaha Hadad a world name; the open competition for the Bat Yam Municipality; and of course - the Holocaust Museum in Berlin, that overnight revealed Daniel Libeskind - musician and inexperienced architect, who managed to spin the world's head with his zigzagging building. Less known is Stalin's competition for the Palace of the Soviets on the ruins of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior; the White House that in 1791 exposed Irish architect James Hoban; and the Palace of Westminster that in the 13th century revealed its planner Charles Barry.

I read the conditions of the competition, breathed deep, closed my eyes, and let time float me to the skies, knowing that if I fall, the (new) stars will catch me. All those for whom we toil. For them and for the honor of the profession I agreed to step out of the magazine's pages and try to bridge between the protesters against the competition and the supporters playing into the hands of big money, who manipulate the making of decisions, not knowing they are digging their own pitfall.

A petition calling for the banning of the competition raised 700 signatures within three days, indicating the realization that this competition can only herald things to come. Call it the battle over the home if you wish, but it concerns many homes that will continue or not to express our bent heads in view of the project managers, the foundations overwhelmed by the money, and simple decision-makers who don't realize that everyone will lose out, if and when architecture finally goes bankrupt. It's about time that Israel too had anonymous competitions open to all, with no difference of credentials, religion and age.

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Baruch Baruch - Chairman of the Architects Association, who sees the competition as an achievement
Osvaldo Stav - Chairperson of the Competition Committee, The reader - you
The writer - **Ami Ran**

“הפסגה, לוחות כחולים”, הונג-קונג - הצעה רעיונית של זהה חדיד לתחרות סטודנטים שחשפה אותה לראשונה ב-1982



The Peak, Blue Slabs, Hong Kong. Zaha Hadid's competition entry already distinguished her as a student in 1982.