

Science Island Kaunas



It seems that since the industrial revolution the equilibrium between man, machine and nature has been violated. One could argue, that the entire story of modern Architecture is nothing but a monumental attempt to reconcile the trauma of the industrial revolution by setting new rules and defining the appropriate conditions for a healthy relationship between man and nature.

Recent discourse often describes Architecture as a discipline which is responsible for the production of *artificial landscape*. This is probably true and is a the result of the realization that the power of man and technology has finally managed to defeat nature. It seems that almost every where you go in our planet, there's a trace or a foot print of an "aggressive" human behavior.

We can not deny that technology and human activity have become a concerning factor in shaping of our future. Therefore, in our proposal we are

attempting to reinstate the *status quo* between man and nature. Our building has become a *hybrid* between artificial natural landscapes. The Science Center and the Kaunas Island have now become one.

From our perspective, the city of Kaunas projects a strong formal grid structure from the northern bank of the Nemunas River into the park. For us, this was a useful tool to explore the possible relationship between structural language and nature. We found this rational grid to be useful. It enabled us to connect the building to the historical urban block system, to construct a simple structural wall system, to expose the building to light through the main northern and southern façades and block the sun at the problematic eastern and western elevations. The relatively neutral geometry of the Cartesian grid enabled us to relax and pronounce its presence as needed. The structure of our building is extremely simple. It has a clean rational linear layout in plan and curved articulation in section to allow our building to blend with the soft topography of the "natural" surroundings. Our design is an attempt to introduce a new harmonious condition in which, man, machine and nature coexist while providing a seductive and comfortable exterior and interior environments. Our building, in its exterior, is nothing but a ridge in a landscape; in its interior however, it is a protected environment which invites in the exterior both physically and imaginary. In the warm season, the structural shell is used to ventilate the public space by introducing vertical spaces, which generate passive air circulation, while in the cold winter it generates a "green house" effect. Our building is anchored to the deep ground to exploit the geothermic benefits of the ground temperature and constructed as much as possible, with traditional low cost sustainable technology.

In our presentation, we would like to convince the jury that our building truly reflects the promise of this competition as we see it, which is to sustain the green Nemunas Island Park and to make it function as a vibrant Science Center in the heart of Kaunas.