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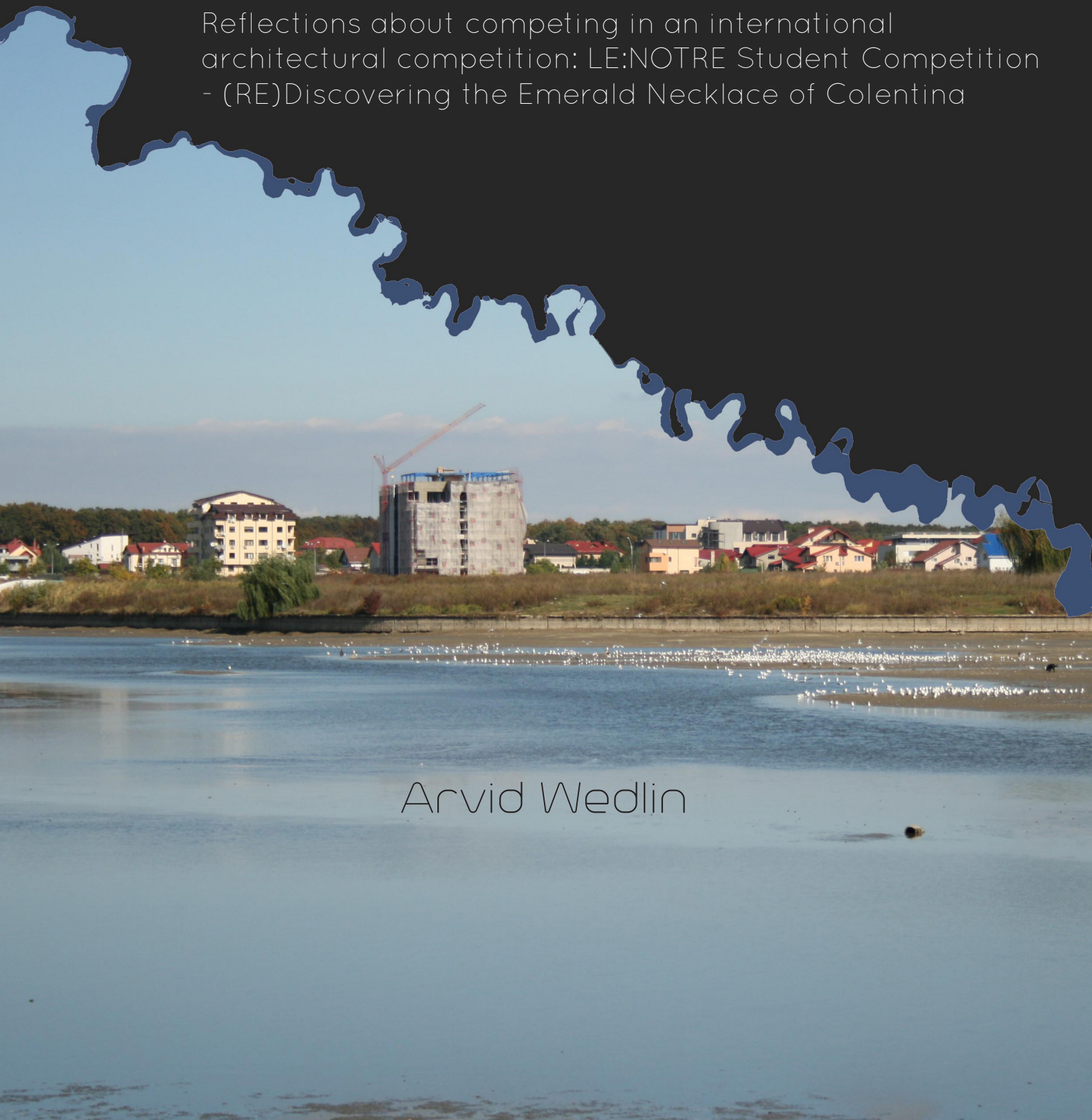
Department of Urban  
and Rural Development

Master's Thesis  
Landscape Architect programme, Uppsala 2015

# A Competitor's Reflections

Reflections about competing in an international  
architectural competition: LE:NOTRE Student Competition  
- (RE)Discovering the Emerald Necklace of Colentina

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Master's thesis for the Landscape Architect programme  
EX0504 Degree Project in Landscape Architecture, 30 HEC

Level: Advanced A2E

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*Title in English: A Competitor's Reflections - Reflections about competing in an international architectural competition: LE:NOTRE Student Competition - (RE)Discovering the Emerald Necklace of Colentina*

*Titel på svenska: En tävlandes reflektioner - Reflektioner om att tävla i en internationell arkitekttävling: LE:NOTRE Student Competition - (ÅTER)Upptäcka Colentinas Pärlband*

*Master's thesis' Appendix title: Retain, Restore and Revive*

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*Cover image: Illustration by author, based on Picture 075 © LE:NOTRE Institute*

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*Original format: A4*

*Key words: International architectural competition, introspection, student competition, Colentina, LE:NOTRE,*

*Nyckelord: Internationell arkitekttävling, introspektion, studenttävling, Colentina, LE:NOTRE,*

*Online publication of this work: <http://epsilon.slu>*

## PREFACE

My name is Arvid Wedlin and I am studying landscape architecture. I completed this master's thesis during the spring of 2015, as my final project of my studies to become a landscape architect.

I am a very competitive person and I have always been interested in competing in sports, games and just about everything. To participate in a competition as part of my master's thesis has been both fun and exciting and I have gotten much experience in the element of architectural competitions. I hope that it is something I will do when working as a landscape architect as well.

I hope you will find this thesis interesting and that you will learn something when reading it. I also hope to inspire others in competing, as I see it as a way to improve your skills and think outside the box.

Thanks.

*The winners mentality is not about winning; it is about behaving and thinking like a winner. It is the mindset that high performers need to excel, to succeed, and to be the best they can be. Winners know how to concentrate and focus, to overcome obstacles and not lose sight of their goals, to learn from defeats, to overcome discouragement and frustration, to perform maximally.*

Bob Reese (2015)

## ABSTRACT

In the profession of architects there is an element called architectural competitions, where several architects compete in submitting the best solution for a certain task. In this master's thesis I am studying the competitor's perspective of an international architectural competition, while at the same time gaining experiences for my future career as a landscape architect.

The aim of this thesis is to through an introspection of my own process examine a competitors view of the international architectural competition and how to approach the difficulties concerning international competitions. Through that I hope obtain experience about the international competition as part of the profession of landscape architects and other involved professions. The main issue was:

**How do I experience the competitor's perspective of an international architectural competition and what are the main difficulties?**

*How do I create an innovative and unique proposal that fulfills the aims and requirements of the competition?*

*How can I create an understanding of a site and how it is experienced, without visiting it?*

*What are the difficulties in creating a competition submission in LE:NOTRE Student Competition?*

*How is my proposal different from the winning proposals and what conclusions come from that?*

To find this out, I entered and competed in LE:NOTRE Student Competition, an international architectural competition for students where the task was to develop 25 kilometers of complex urban periphery along a chain or Emerald Necklace of natural and artificial lakes in Bucharest, Romania.

My working process contained a five step method of *Research - Conceptual ideas - Inventory - Analysis - Proposal* where I went from knowing nothing at all about the site and the task, to completing a proposal and submitting it in the competition.

The idea of my competition submission called *Retain, Restore and Revive*, build upon the intentional purpose of the artificial lakes; to serve as water supply, irrigation, fishing and primary leisure. Existing values will be retained, vacant lands and available shores will be restored into green spaces and the entire area will be revived with a new identity uniting people and attracting tourists.

The submission was then evaluated in the jury selection, where it got evaluated against criteria of *Connection to Site, Creativity, Concept and Method, Holistic Approach* and *Visual Quality*. My total score was 26 out of 40.

Discussing the working process and the results, I bring up the difficulties in competing in an international architectural competition and what experiences I obtained through my introspection of my participation in a competition. I also discuss creating a competition submission that is both innovative and unique and at the same time fulfills the aim and requirements. Furthermore, I discuss the wider perspective of architectural competitions and their part of the profession of architects.

Lastly, I mention my own experience and development when completing this competition and the master's thesis, how I have found myself as a landscape architect and the harmony in designing.

## SAMMANFATTNING

Som en vidareutveckling av min kandidatuppsats kallad *Vinnarnas gemensamma nämnare* (Wedlin 2013) där jag undersökte vad vinnande arkitekttävlingsförslag har gemensamt, så var mina intentioner nu att bredda mina och andras kunskaper genom att undersöka en tävlandes perspektiv av en internationell arkitekttävling. Till skillnad från att undersöka andras tävlingsförslag ville jag den här gången själv deltaga i en tävling och utnyttja det jag lärde mig genom kandidatuppsatsen och under mina år som studerande landskapsarkitekt.

För att undersöka en tävlandes bild av internationella arkitekttävlingar registrerade jag mig och deltog i studenttävlingen *LE:NOTRE Student Competition* (LE:NOTRE Institute 2014a). Tävlingen gick ut på att utveckla en vision för ett område längs med en kedja eller ett pärlband av artificiella sjöar i Bukarest, Rumänien. Sjöarna hade konstruerats för att bidra med vattenförsörjning, bevattning, fiske och framförallt friluftsliv i det urbana landskapet, men har över åren förfallit och förlorat både sitt syfte och sin användning. Istället har kedjan av sjöar bildat en lång barriär, som separerar de centrala delarna av Bukarest från dess perifera delar, vilket har lett till en uppdelat urbant landskap och ett uppdelat samhälle. Tävlingsuppgiften är således att hitta en hållbar lösning som binder ihop hela området och ser till att det återfår sitt värde i stadsväven.

Att delta i en arkitekttävling innebär att arbeta mot ett okänt mål, där det till skillnad mot att arbeta mot en klient eller beställare och dennes åsikter, handlar om att tolka en tävlingsuppgift, dess mål och krav, men samtidigt ändå vara innovativ och sticka ut.

Att delta i en internationell arkitekttävling innebär också andra utmaningar, exempelvis hur man skapar sig en bild av en plats som är annorlunda från det man är van vid, utan att besöka den.

## Syfte och frågeställningar

Syftet med det här examensarbetet är att genom en introspektion av min egen process undersöka en tävlandes perspektiv av en internationell arkitekttävling och hur man tar sig an de hinder och svårigheter det innebär. På så sätt kan kunskap inhämtas om internationella tävlingar som en del av arkitekters och andra involverades professioner. Det viktiga i det här examensarbetet är att undersöka tävlandet och skapandet av ett tävlingsförslag, även om detta så klart också resulterar i ett färdigt förslag på två dubbla A1:or, samt ett resultat i tävlingen.

Examensarbetets frågeställningar är följande, där den första är huvudfrågeställningen:

- **Hur upplever jag den tävlandes perspektiv av en internationell arkitekttävling och vilka är de huvudsakliga svårigheterna?**
- *Hur kan jag skapa ett innovativt och unikt förslag som uppfyller tävlingens mål och krav?*
- *Hur kan jag skapa en förståelse för platsen och hur den upplevs, utan att besöka den?*
- *Vilka är svårigheterna med att skapa ett tävlingsförslag i LE:NOTRE Student Competition?*
- *Hur är mitt förslag annorlunda från de vinnande förslagen och vilka slutsatser kan jag dra från det?*

## Metod

Metoden jag använde för att skapa ett tävlingsförslag var en modifiering av den metod jag framförallt har övat på under arbetet: *Inventering-Analys-Förslag*. I min modifierade version har jag lagt till två steg innan inventeringen för att få en friare och mer kreativ idéfas. Metoden är således: *Undersökning - Konceptuella idéer - Inventering - Analys -*

*Förslag.* Därefter sker presentation och visualisering av förslaget.

## Genomförande

Det första steget, Undersökning, innebar att förstå tävlingsuppgiften och tävlingsområdet. Det innebar även att bestämma sig för vilket av fyra valbara huvudfokus förslaget skulle ha och vilket av fyra valbara detaljeringsområden jag rumsligt skulle gestalta. Jag valde *Hållbar turism och rekreation* som huvudfokus och *Lacul Straulesti* som detaljeringsområde.

Därefter hade jag en första idéfas, där jag genererade konceptuella idéer; ett övergripande koncept för hela området och ett rumsligt koncept.

Inventering och analys av området utifrån för tävlande tillgängligt material följde därefter, vilket så småningom ledde fram till ett förslag där jag definierade de konceptuella idéerna genom konkretisering och argumentation, samt gestaltning av detaljeringsområdet.

Avslutningsvis visualiserade jag förslaget på två dubbla A1:or. Dessa, tillsammans med en projektbeskrivning på 250 ord och ett signerat upphovsrättsformulär, bildade det tävlingsförslag som skickades in i tävlingen.

## Tävlingsbidraget

Namnet på mitt tävlingsförslag är *Retain, Restore and Revive*, vilket översatt till svenska betyder *Bevara, Restaurera och Förnya*. Förslaget bygger på områdets ursprungsyfte och att det främst skulle användas till rekreation. Visionen var att områdets värden skulle bevaras, tillgängliga områden och stränder skulle restaureras till grönområden med högre biologiska, ekologiska och rekreationella värden och att området skulle förnyas med nya sociala mötesplatser och en ny identitet, för hållbar turism och rekreation.

Förslaget fick 26 av 40 poäng i juryvärderingen, vilket varken räckte till seger eller final.

## Diskussion

Som slutsats kan nämnas att det finns flera olika svårigheter med internationella arkitekttävlingar. Dels kan allt runt omkring själva skapandet av ett tävlingsförslag vara svårt, det vill säga alla formaliteter, det material som finns tillgängligt, hur och vad som ska lämnas in och så vidare. Dels kan tävlingens specifika krav innehålla svårigheter i skapandet av ett tävlingsförslag. Det kan till exempel vara svårt att tolka målet med tävlingen och skapa sig in bild av en plats man inte besöker. Ytterligare en svårighet ligger i ens egna bakgrund och erfarenheter. Det påverkar hur man läser av bilder och material, hur man uppfattar att platser kommer uppfattas och hur man tar sig an olika problem man ställs inför.

Vidare kan man diskutera om man lättast undersöker en tävlandes perspektiv genom att delta i en tävling själv eller genom att intervjua tävlanden eller på något helt annat sätt. Min åsikt är att det oavsett är bäst om man åtminstone har upplevt en tävling själv, för att kunna relatera till hur det är att delta i en tävling och vilka svårigheter som kan uppkomma.

Ur ett bredare perspektiv kan man diskutera om arkitekturen blir bäst genom en arkitekttävling, där kreativitet och innovation privilegieras, eller genom vanligt arkitektoniskt arbete där dialogen mellan arkitekt och klient är viktig och gestaltningen kan bli mer specifik och personlig. Man kan också diskutera om den internationella tävlingen tillför ett värdefullt utbyte mellan olika regioner och stilar, eller om det generaliserar arkitekturen globalt, så att den blir liknande världen över? Det kan undersökas ytterligare.

Avslutningsvis kan tävlingsresultatet nämnas. Mitt förslag var inte tillräckligt för en final, då tävlingsjuryn ville ha ett tydligare stadsutvecklingsgrepp. Även min detaljersgrad var för låg jämfört med de vinnande förslagen.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank the following:

### Rolf Johansson, Supervisor

Thank you for supporting me through the process of both completing a competition submission and writing this master's thesis.

### Ellen Fetzer, LE:NOTRE Institute and LE:NOTRE Student Competition Organizing Committee

Thank you for supporting me in making a reflection about competing in an international architectural competition.

### Family and Friends

Thank you for always being there for me, and for the everyday support.

## STRUCTURE OF THIS MASTER'S THESIS

This is the written composition of the master's thesis called A Competitor's Reflection. This master's thesis also consists of a competition submission of two double A1 posters and a project description. They are only partially included in this written composition, but can be fully viewed at <http://epsilon.slu.se> under the name: Retain, Restore and Revive.

### Structure of this written composition

This written composition is divided into three parts. The Parts are color coded, to make it easier to browse.

PART 01:

Introduction and Methodology

PART 02:

Working process and  
Competition result

PART 03:

Reflection and Discussion



This symbol marks illustrations were part of my competition submission.

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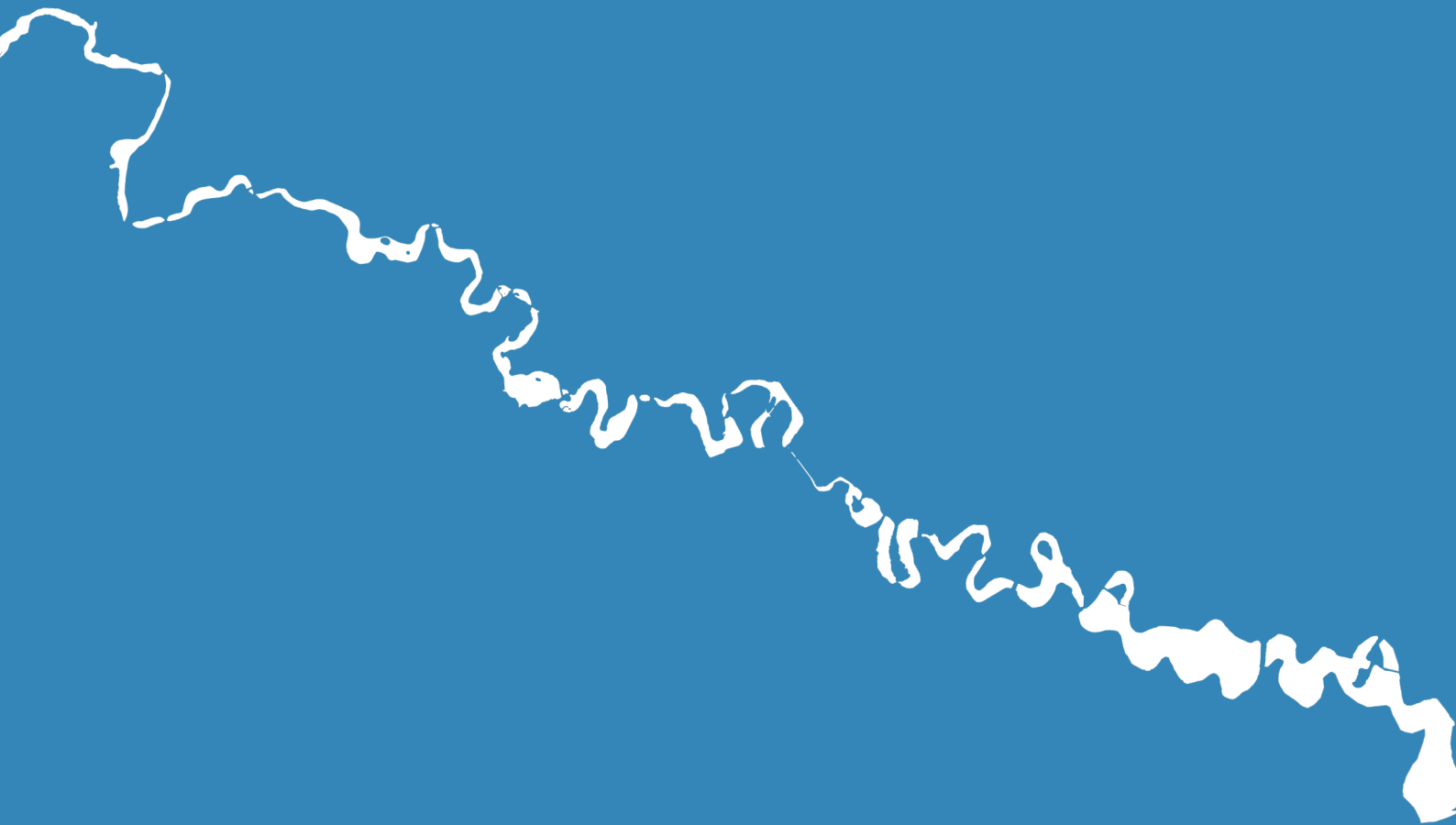
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A satellite photograph of Bucharest, Romania, showing a dense urban area with a complex network of roads and buildings. The city is surrounded by green spaces and water bodies. A large blue rectangular overlay covers the left half of the image, partially obscuring the city details. The number '01' is displayed in white on the blue background.

# 01

## Introduction and Methodology

Background photo showing central  
Bucharest. ISS002-E-8894,  
NASA (2001).



# INTRODUCTION

This section contains an introduction to this master's thesis and a description of LE:NOTRE Student Competition. It also includes the problem statement, aims, issues and goals, limitations and results of the master's thesis.

Almost two years ago, I wrote my bachelor's thesis called *The 'Winners' Common Denominators* (Wedlin 2013) where I examined what winning competition submissions have in common, through a comparative study. Studying different competitions and winning submissions made me inspired and more than generally interested in architectural competitions. By examining thoughtful and well elaborated submissions and getting knowledge from research I first and foremost gained valuable experience about competitions and presenting submissions, but also developed an understanding about the competition as an element in the profession of architects. Architectural competitions depend on many factors including the competition management and committee, the jury, the site, the task, the aim and of course the competitors and their submissions. Architectural competition is a wide subject where more research definitely is possible.

For this master's thesis I seized to widen my and others' perspectives of architectural competitions by participating in a competition. Contrary to studying others' submissions, this time I wanted to experience the competitor's view of the architectural competition and also use my experiences gained in my bachelor thesis and in the final years of the landscape architecture education. To challenge myself and get a perspective of the international competition and its difficulties, I joined the international student competition LE:NOTRE Student Competition with the theme: (RE) Discovering the Emerald Necklace of Colentina (LE:NOTRE Institute 2014a).

The competition task was to create a vision of sustainable development for the Emerald Necklace of Colentina in Bucharest, Romania. The Emerald Necklace is a chain of artificial lakes along the Colentina River, constructed and finished during the 20th century for the purpose of water supply, irrigation, fishing and primary leisure (LE:NOTRE Institute 2014b). The chain and the closest area around has decayed over the years and become a barrier in the city of Bucharest.



Illustration of Europe, with Bucharest, Romania and Uppsala, Sweden highlighted in blue.

Bucharest is the capital of Romania and together with Ilfov County it creates the metropolitan area of Bucharest. The metropolitan area is located in the heart of southeast Romania, on the banks of Dambovita and Colentina river.

As the population of the area grows, the city expands and spreads further away from the city center (LE:NOTRE Institute 2014h). In the middle runs the chain of lakes along the Colentina River, dividing the metropolitan area in two and creating a barrier between the center and the city's periphery (LE:NOTRE 2014c).

Consequently, in this competition, competitors are asked to create a vision with a sustainable and holistic approach, to rediscover the area, allowing Colentina to be the Emerald Necklace of lakes it is supposed to be. It should be an area that unites the city rather than cutting it up.

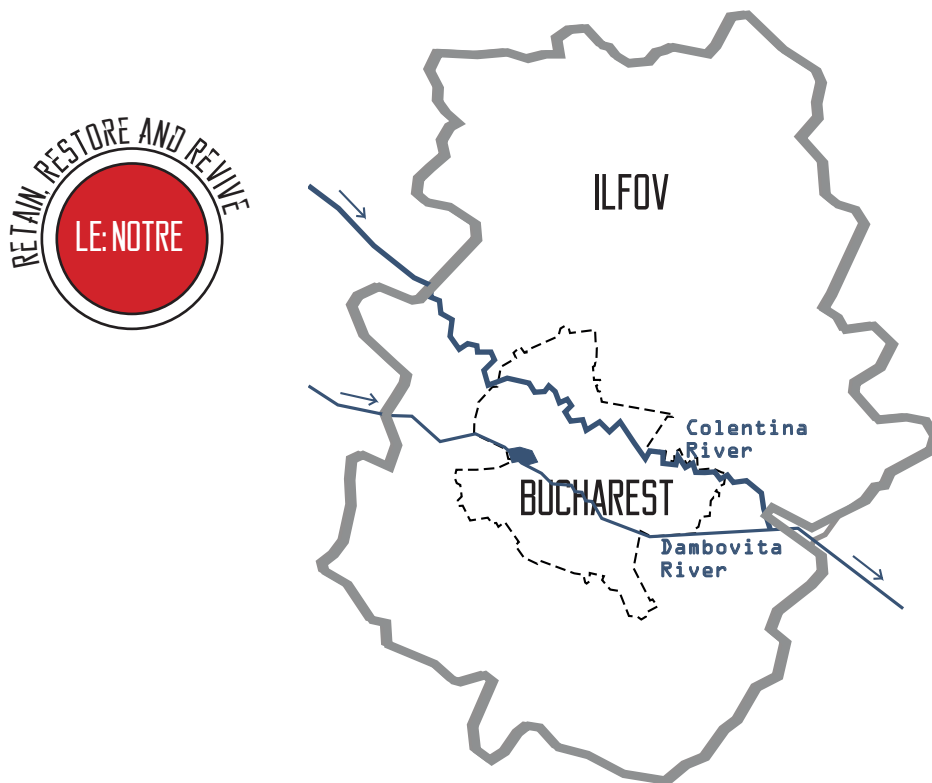


Illustration of Bucharest metropolitan area, showing the Colentina River dividing it in two.

## INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITIONS

What are architectural competitions about? Elisabeth Tostrup (2010 p. 77) sums it up well in her introduction to an article about competition rhetoric:

*"Architectural competitions are about having a number of architects make projects or proposals to solve a particular task. The competitors do this simultaneously, responding to the preconditions and requirements set forth."*

Explained by the Association of Swedish Architects (Sveriges Arkitekter 2008), architecture competitions are ways for architects, landscape architects, urban planners and other involved professions to test and improve their abilities, while being compared with others in an equal and fair assignment. Sveriges Arkitekter further describe it as an element in the profession where creativity and innovativeness are particularly awarded as they generally develop architecture and bring new ideas to the clients. For the clients or management of the competition, it is also a great way to promote themselves and/or the site, get publicity and make it memorable even after the site optionally is transformed (Forssbeck 2010). Even the competing architects will gain publicity while in the competition, which is another reason to compete, even though it can be costly if you don't get any compensation and have to work for free (Tollebrant 2010).

Ellen Fetzer<sup>1</sup>, contact person from the organizing committee of LE:NOTRE Student competition describes the competition as a way to:

- *"Promote the European dimension of landscape architecture, raise European consciousness among young people*
- *Promote interdisciplinary approaches to complex challenges in the urban/ rural interface*
- *Promote strategic and conceptual thinking and integrative approaches, combine planning and design skills for addressing complex situations*
- *Raise awareness for the objectives of LE:NOTRE Institute and the landscape forum*
- *Create knowledge on the forum theme"*

Competitions are both for development of architecture and architects, for promoting organizations, companies and gain publicity on certain sites. Student competitions can be even more positive since it's a learning situation and a possibility to try a real competition, yet not having to worry about the economic situation.

International competitions have the same objectives, but there's another factor added: the internationality. Not only will it get promoted internationally, but it will also attract competitors from all over the world. International competitors will together have a wider approach and perspective on the design and the site and the competition will therefore probably have more diverse proposals and solutions submitted.

LE:NOTRE Student Competition is also an ideas competition not leading directly to implementation. The aim is to open to more discussion about an urban landscape, where all proposals will be ideas and visions for sustainable development and every proposal will be part of an exhibition hosted by LE:NOTRE Institute (2015).

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen Fetzer, LE:NOTRE Institute, E-mail 2015-03-23

## LE:NOTRE STUDENT COMPETITION

Cities and landscapes are continuously changing. Nature is developing and reshaping itself as time goes by on this earth. Landscapes are also changing because of human actions made to fit the human needs and to go hand in hand with present theories about land use and urban development. Actions planned and implemented affect developments of both urban and green spaces in many ways and often also for long periods of time. Therefore, planning and actions need to be sustainable at several various levels, including aspects as functionally, ecologically, socially, culturally, historically, economically, aesthetically and many more.

LE: NOTRE Institute highlights these aspects and the importance of a sustainable and holistic approach to urban and peri-urban development in a natural and semi-natural landscape by arranging an international student competition. LE: NOTRE Institute challenges students from all over the world to compete in their Student Competition with the theme: (Re)Discovering the Emerald Necklace of Colentina (LE:NOTRE Institute 2014a). This is the first competition arranged by LE:NOTRE institute, a platform for those involved in teaching, research and practice in the landscape field. The competition is part of the interactive and interdisciplinary LE:NOTRE Landscape Forum focusing on the landscape of the Colentina lakes in Bucharest, Romania (LE:NOTRE Institute 2015).

### Brief, Aim and Requirements

Theme of the competition is to discover or rediscover the emerald necklace of Colentina in Bucharest, Romania. Colentina River was for the purpose of irrigation, water supply, fishing and primary leisure reconstructed to a chain of lakes during the 20th century (LE:NOTRE Institute 2014b), but has during many years decreased in quality and is now more of a physical and social barrier in the city

and the landscape, separating the periphery from the city. The challenge is as described in the competition brief and description (Appendix A) to develop the 25 kilometers of complex urban periphery along the chain of natural and artificial lakes into a sustainable peripheral landscape. Proposals should also be developed around certain aspects, and one of four predetermined main themes (Appendix A).

Every proposal also needed to contain a detailed plan of the concept, showing one of the four lakes Straulesti, Grivita, Floreasca or Pantelimon. All in all, the submission was required to comprise four A1 or two double A1 posters in landscape format, including some requirements, for example a plan in 1:25000, a plan in 1:500 and other illustrations (Appendix A).

## Jury Selection

After the competition deadline every competition submission was evaluated by the competition jury, consisting of the following six jury members: three landscape architects, two landscape planners and one architect.

### **Jury Members of LE:NOTRE Student Competition**

- *Professor Fritz Auweck, landscape planner, Munich (DE), IFLA-Europe*
- *Christoph Menzel, landscape architect, Liège (BE) + ULB Brussels (BE)*
- *Dr Cristina Enache, architect, Ion Mincu University for Architecture and Urbanism (RO)*
- *Martha Fajardo, landscape architect, Bogota (CO), IFLA Former President, LALI (Latin American landscape Initiative) Chair*
- *Dr Piotr Lorens, ISOCARP Vice President YPP, Gdansk University of Technology (PL)*
- *Ioana Streza, landscape architect, Romanian Association of Landscape Architecture (RO)*

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

To compete in a architectural competition means to work towards an unknown goal, where it in contrast to working with a client and its opinions and continuous feedback is all about interpretation of the competition's program, aims and the situation, yet at the same time be innovative and unique. Main problem of architectural competitions is to do just that; to submit a unique and special proposal, yet to be spot on with the competition management's and jury's thoughts about the competition task and how it can or ought to be solved.

Competing in LE:NOTRE Student Competition furthermore include other problems, for example how to create an understanding of the competition and its aims from the given material, how to picture and experience the site without visiting it and how to tackle a task on a site where the conditions are very different from what I am used to in Sweden.

## AIM, ISSUES AND GOALS

This master's thesis' aim is to through an introspection examine a competitors view of the international competition and how to approach the difficulties concerning international competitions and through that examination obtain experience about the international architectural competition as part of the profession of landscape architects and other involved professions. This is an introspection, where I examine my own process and view as a competitor in an international competition and therefore the importance of this thesis is competing and the process in creating a competition submission, not the outcome.

Working on this thesis, my main issues are the following. The first one is the main issue:

- **How do I experience the competitor's perspective of an international architectural competition and what are the main difficulties?**
- How do I create an innovative and unique proposal that fulfills the aims and requirements of the competition?
- How can I create an understanding of a site and how it is experienced, without visiting it?
- What are the difficulties in creating a competition submission in LE:NOTRE Student Competition?
- How is my proposal different from the winning proposals and what conclusions come from that?

## LIMITATIONS

This thesis is limited to my view of a competitor's perspective of an international architectural competition, through reflecting and discussing my own process in creating my competition submission, the experience I gained, the results and comparing with other submissions in LE:NOTRE Student Competition. LE:NOTRE Student Competition is an international architectural competition for students, which differs from a regular international architectural competition for working architects. For this thesis I have overlooked these differences, but discussed it in the discussion part.

The competition work was limited to the five weeks because of the deadline on March 8th, which meant little time for each of the parts in the process towards a completed submission. Requirements in the competition program was also limiting, including the choice of overall concept and detailing area, where I choose to work with Sustainable Tourism and Leisure and the detailing area of Lacul Straulesti.

## RESULTS

The result of this master's thesis is both the two double A1-posters submitted in the competition and the working process in creating them. The submission is my solution to the aim and issues of the competition. This written composition explains my process and answers to the aim and issues of the master's thesis.

## DEFINITIONS

Definitions of words, terms and concepts used in this thesis:

### Definitions of Words, Terms and Concepts Used in This Thesis

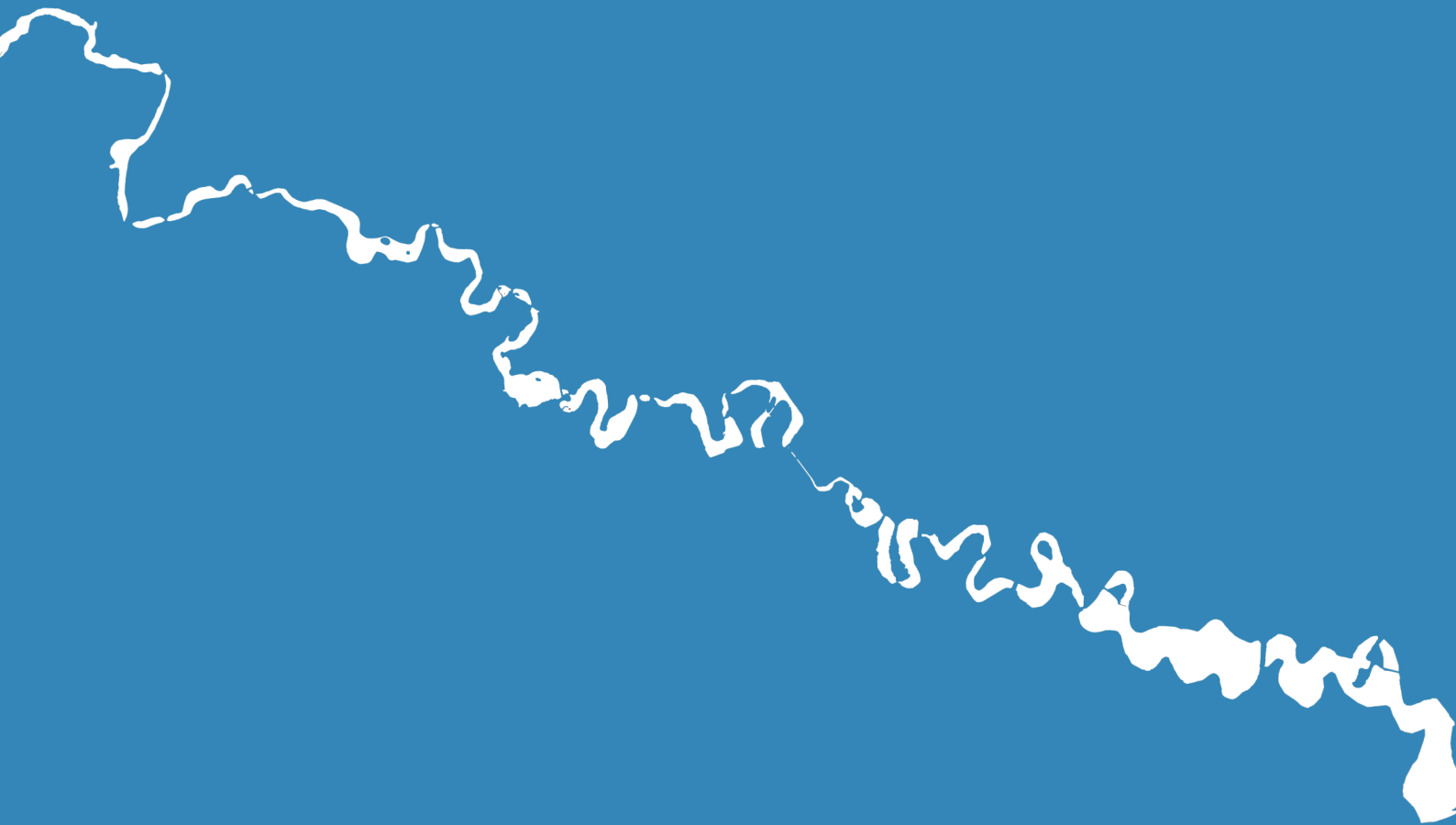
- *Architectural competition* - a competition where architects and other involved professions compete to create the best solutions to a given task
- *Competition Proposal* or *Proposal* - The idea and design of a solution to the task in a competition
- *Competition Submission* or *Submission* - The documents submitted by the competitor: competition proposal, project description and declaration form
- *Competitor's Perspective* - The image or view of something from the eyes and mind of a competitor
- *Connectivity* - several connected and united areas. Green spaces creates a green corridor together, through connectivity.
- *Holistic Approach* - to perceive something as one thing. The area and the chain of lakes should be perceived and experienced as one, united area.
- *Ideas competition* - a competition where the aim is solutions that are ideas or visions, not finished, implementable designs
- *International architectural competitions* - architectural competitions where architects from several nations are allowed to participate. In this thesis I count LE:NOTRE Student Competition as an International Architectural Competition, even though it's a International Student Competition.
- *Introspection* - selfobservation, to observe your own process and experiences and thereby try to understand an event
- *Unpublished material* - documents and material including texts, maps and pictures, only available to the competitors of the competition

# 01

## Introduction and Methodology

Background photo showing tools  
I used to create the submission  
and the master's thesis.





# METHODOLOGY

In this section the methods used for creating the competition submission is explained.

This section also contains a short description of the methods used for reflection, evaluation and comparison.

Methods I used in this master's thesis to complete a competition submission describe how I work as a landscape architect and they are methods I have learned during the education and modified to a working process that suits me. As this is my final project in this education, I intended to practice this methodology and do it the way I intend to work in the real profession as a landscape architect. This is my own design method.

## DESIGN METHODOLOGY

During my years at the landscape architecture education at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences I mainly practiced the method of Inventory - Analysis - Proposal to complete the assignments given in different courses. It's a thoroughgoing method, very functionally oriented as it first and foremost has very thorough inventory and analysis parts. To fit my own design process better, I have modified it. My method can be described as:

- *Research*
- *Conceptual ideas*
- *Inventory*
- *Analysis*
- *Proposal*

This isn't a linear method, but it gives me a creative and free start, with ideas that I later can develop through the implementation of the method. It still leads to a functional and site connected proposal, but it allows more creative and innovative ideas.

This is the overall method for the entire process. Every step also contains different methods of specific purpose.

## Research

First off is an initial research about the competition and the site, for example trying to interpret the following:

- *What are the aims and issues in the competition?*
- *What are the requirements of the submission?*
- *What is the main problem on site?*
- *What are the main values on site?*
- *What information and basic data are available?*
- *How should I approach this task?*

It is just a first research to get an idea about the task and the site, without making it too thoroughgoing, yet knowing enough too generate realistic conceptual ideas.

Methods:

- *Literature Studies* - to answer the questions above, find key aspects and start understanding the site. Mostly unpublished material for competitors and the competition description.
- *Map and Picture Studies* - to understand and experience the site. Maps and pictures were part of the unpublished material.
- *Google Street View* (Google 2015) - to understand and experience the site.

## Conceptual Ideas

The second step is to come up with conceptual ideas. After getting some general information in the research step, one should have an understanding of the site and the issues and subsequently be able to come up with ideas and visions. They shouldn't be too detailed, just ideas of what could be done to solve the problems or strengthen the values.

Methods:

- *Inspiration search* - to get inspired by other projects and ideas. Anything from words and arguments to shapes and architecture.
- *Elaboration and Sketching* - using conclusions from the research to elaborate and sketch on these and the inspiration to come up with conceptual ideas

## Inventory

As a third step is the inventory, which now can be adjusted to focus on the most important parts of the conceptual ideas. Inventory contains going through the competition description in detail to get as much information as possible about the highlighted issues and values. Inventory also contains exploring and studying the site in detail, what it contains and how it's used, possible obstacles for the conceptual ideas and other objective facts.

Methods:

- *Literature Studies* - Thoroughgoing studies of the entire area and each lake and its surroundings.
- *Creating Maps* - to understand the content of the area, for example public transportation, green spaces, urban tissue and valuable areas.
- *Map and Picture Studies* - to understand and experience the site. Maps and pictures were part of the unpublished material.
- *Google Street View* (Google 2015) - to understand and experience the site.

## Analysis

Analysis can subsequently also be adjusted to subjectively affect the important parts of the conceptual ideas. For example where the most important areas or nodes are, what

and where the values really are, what the weaknesses or strengths are and so on. Perhaps one idea won't be possible, or perhaps one idea is better than the others.

Methods:

- *Literature Studies* - using analysis of the area from unpublished material and analyzing information from the inventory.
- *Shore Accessibility* - analyzing today's situation and the potential of shorelines of every lake
- *SWOT-Analysis* - to summarize the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the area
- *Theoretical Research* - Elaborating literature studies to find arguments on subjects important to my competition submission, Ecotourism and Ecosystem Services.

## Proposal

Finally the proposal can be created, where the idea can be defined and designed in detail. Working on defining and designing, can implicate more inventory and analysis as there are probably parts added and more information needed. Perhaps the problem is understood differently as well. As mentioned before, it is not a linear process and going back doing more research just mean the proposal will be more elaborated.

Methods:

- *Compilation and Elaboration* - of the assembled information from the previous steps. Development of the conceptual ideas and adaption to the situation and the area
- *Sketching* - on the spatial concept and the physical design of areas, paths and details

## DESIGN AND PRESENTATION

When the proposal and final idea is defined, the design and presentation of the submission is created. The design is first hand sketched and then recreated on the computer, using various software. Available material, for example maps and pictures, was used as base layer in creating plans and illustrations.

Software:

- *AutoCAD* - to create base layers for SketchUp
- *SketchUp* - to create models for 3D-illustrations
- *Photoshop* - to create illustrations of different areas, paths and details and to create base layers for plans showing the entire area and the detailing area
- *Illustrator* - to create plans and diagrams showing the entire area, the detailing area and different aspects of the site
- *InDesign* - to create a presentation of the competition proposal and compile the illustrations and maps

## REFLECTION, EVALUATION AND COMPARISON

After the proposal was submitted in the competition, reflection, evaluation and comparison started. It's a reflection about my process, evaluation of my final submission and comparison with other proposals.

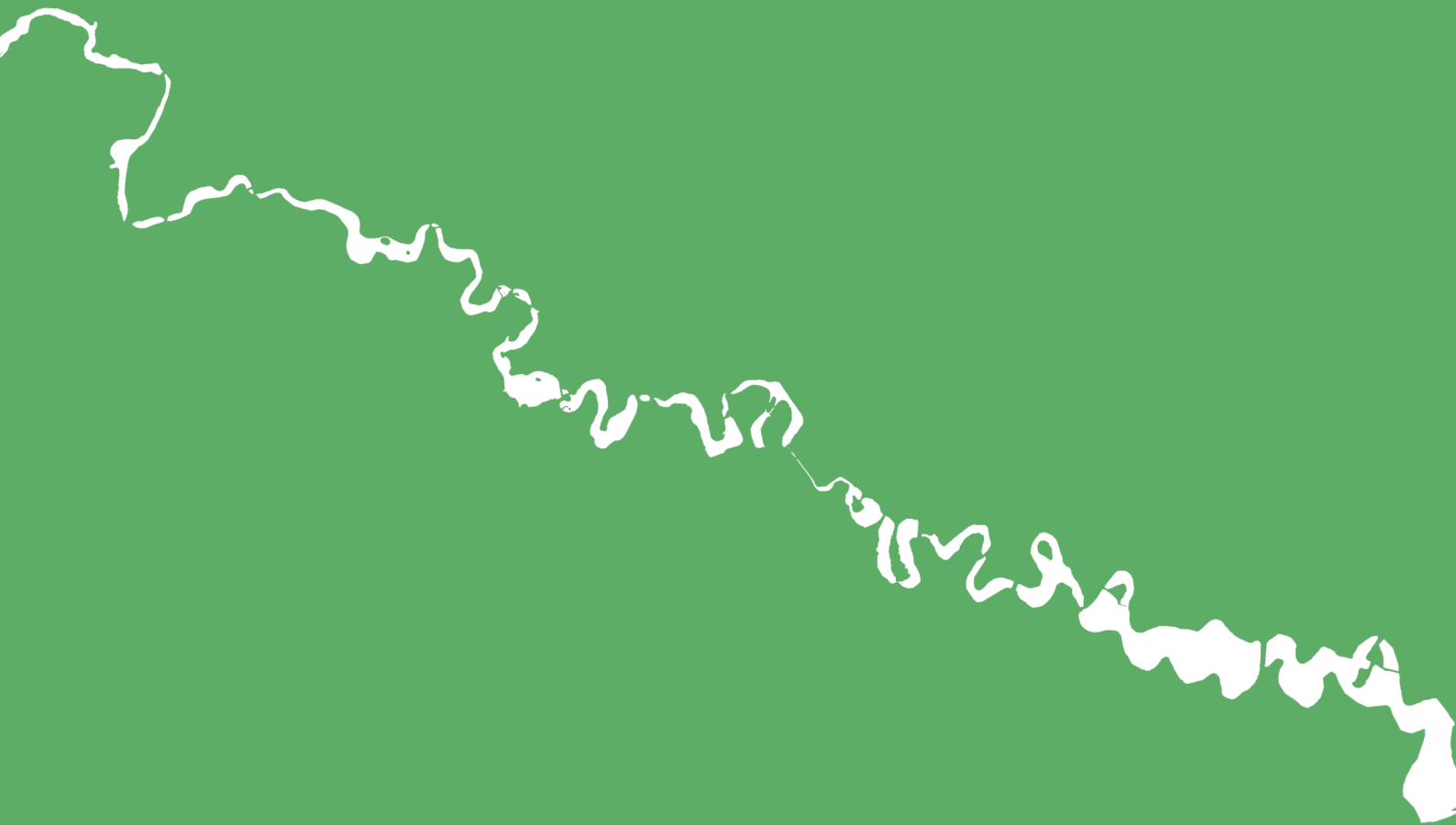


My working space during Inventory and Analysis.

# 02

Working process  
and Competition  
results

Background photo showing analysis  
sketch of some lakes of the  
Colentina River.



# WORKING PROCESS

In this section I explain my working process in detail, how I implemented the different methods, what I did, how I did it and why. I will also describe the comparison with other proposals, which was done after the competition ended

This section will be fairly thoroughgoing, as the purpose of this thesis is to get the competitor's perspective of an international competition and therefore the process in creating the competition submission is most important.

## RESEARCH

Before deciding to compete in this competition the competition's organizing committee confirmed that they would accept both participating in the competition and then writing about it in my master's thesis, using material and illustrations from the competition<sup>2</sup>.

In the preface of my progress I registered for the competition at the LE:NOTRE Student Competition homepage (LE:NOTRE Institute 2014d) and a day after that I got my personal anonymous ID and a password to get access to a platform with, for competitors, available material and information about the competition and the site. Directly, I briefly went through the material and data to see what kind of information I could find there and downloaded most of the things to my computer.

### Competition Format and Objectives

Starting off the research I then went through the competition description (Appendix A) to understand the format, aim and objectives. As I have experienced in other competition descriptions or competition programs, it also include quite a lot of aims and issues, hard or impossible to manage with the time given and required or allowed paper space. Therefore I had to make my own interpretation of the aim and issues and try to picture what they really want.

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2 Ellen Fetzer, LE:NOTRE Institute, E-mail 2015-01-13

Shortly, I would describe the aim as I describe it to friends and family:

*It is a chain of artificial lakes in Bucharest, Romania, that has lost it's purpose, decayed and turned into a barrier instead of a connecting blue and green area. It's about creating a vision of regenerating the chain of lakes in a sustainable way.*

However, this is also a very general description. To describe it more firmly, my interpretation of the aim is the following:

*The aim is to create a vision to develop the 25 kilometer chain of artificial lakes along the Colentina river, into a sustainable and holistic area, connecting the city center and the urban periphery. The vision should be to turn the Colentina river into a well-used blue and green space, joining urban areas and uniting the people of Bucharest. The proposals should include sustainable traffic solutions, tourism, recreational and ecological functions in the area.*

Knowing the aim and objectives of the competition, it further obligates two choices; one of four overall themes (1) and one of four detailing areas (2).

### **The Four Overall Themes**

- *Urban growth and peri-urban sprawl*
- *Sustainable tourism and leisure*
- *Heritage and identity*
- *Rural fringe and productive landscape*

Out of the four themes, I choose Sustainable tourism and leisure mainly because it's the one I think suits me the best. If I was working on a team with urban designers, landscape planners or other professions, the other themes could have been interesting, but tourism and leisure seemed directed to landscape architects. During my education I have focused a lot on urban places, and green spaces, where recreation and leisure usually are a big part. The huge site and the time available made me go for the one I was more familiar with, instead of challenging myself even more.

#### **The Four Detailing Areas**

- *Lacul Straulesti*
- *Lacul Grivita*
- *Lacul Floreasca*
- *Lacul Pantelimon*

To decide which lake to choose, I needed to look into them quite a lot more to see what values and issues they have. At the first quick look, two of the lakes seemed more suitable than the others; Lacul<sup>3</sup> Straulesti and Lacul Grivita. Both of them have some vacant lands, idle parks and urban areas, while Lacul Floreasca seemed to have mostly green residential areas and Lacul Pantelimon had an intense urban problem with disconnected urban tissue and high criminal rates. For my overall theme, it would therefore be Lacul Straulesti or Lacul Grivita, but I waited until after the idea stage to decide.

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3      *Lacul* is the Romanian word for *Lake*

## Key Aspects

From the interpretation of the competition description and information about the site I could define a couple of key aspects, the most important aspects to generate ideas and design around. I always had them in the back of my head, when strengthening and developing my submission. The key aspects according to me was divided into *Overall Vision* and *Design and Presentation*.

### **Overall Vision**

- *Sustainability*
- *Holistic Approach*
- *Connectivity*

The word Sustainable is written multiple times in the competition program. Even though my personal idea is that sustainability is over-used as a concept and therefore also has lost it's power, it is what they want the visions to build upon. The area should be functionally, ecologically, socially, culturally, historically, economically and aesthetically sustainable.

In the competition program they also ask for visions that have an holistic approach. My interpretation is that they want it to be perceived and experienced as one joined area, and thereby unite the city and integrate the people.

The last key aspect for the visions or ideas is connectivity. Today, the area is very cut up and the Colentina River functions as a barrier. Different lakes have different functions and some aren't even accessible. By connecting areas, including green spaces and urban tissue, Colentina will be even more unified.

### **Design and Presentation**

- *Creativeness and Innovativeness*
- *Connection to the site*
- *Clarity*

In the competition program, there is also a section with Evaluation Criteria. There and in the description they mention these three key aspects.

The first one, Creativeness, I read as something every proposal probably has, but that it means to be creative, either in how to solve the problem, or in the design itself. I also think of it as being creative without any limits. The economic aspects aren't as important as the idea in general. Innovativeness and creativeness are connected, but with innovativeness the proposal will contain a unique and somewhat new vision. It could be something they haven't seen before, or haven't seen at this scale or in this context.

Even though they are asking for visionary proposals, it is still important that the visions have a connection to the site. The ideas have to be well elaborated to fit in the landscape of around Colentina, consequently leading to a thorough inventory and analysis.

Finally, they are asking for clarity in the proposals. Ideas should be clear and the submissions should be easy to read and understand. Visual quality is important.

### **Submission Requirements**

Going through the competition program (Appendix A) I also took note of the submission requirements. One submission requires three different documents or files.

### One Submission Requires:

- 4 *A1 Posters showing and explaining the vision in plans, illustrations and text*
- 1 *Project Description explaining the main idea of the proposal in 250 words*
- 1 *Author's Declaration where I promise not to publish anything before deadline or using established data for other purposes.*

The four A1 posters could also be submitted as two double A1 posters, which would enable the possibility to show the entire overall plan in 1:25000 on one page. I wanted to do the double A1 alternative, as it would make the layout uniform.

Apart from the required graphic, the posters could include different illustration to clarify the concept. My intention was to create a variation of illustrations.

### Illustrations

- 3D illustrations or photo collages
- Sections
- Small diagrams

Another important obligation was the anonymity. Every poster had to be coded with a competition ID and nothing could be included in the texts that would reveal the authors.

## Understanding the Site

Knowing the task, the aim and the requirement, I still didn't know the site and what kind of area this is. I knew the issues it had and what the competition management wanted it to become, but not why it's a chain of lakes, how the area is experienced or anything like that. Before generating conceptual ideas I needed to know the area better, what it is like and how it's used. This information I got through:

### Material and Tools

- *History brief - acquired on the competition homepage*
- *Aerial views - acquired on the competition homepage, maps similar to google maps, but with better quality*
- *Google Street View*
- *Web conference - online colloquium with organizing committee*

*Bucharest: The Birth of a Landscape* (LE:NOTRE Institute 2014b) was a history brief explaining how the landscape and city has transformed over the years. It described how the Colentina River was constructed into a chain of artificial lakes during two periods in the 20th century, for the purpose of water supply, irrigation, fishing and primary leisure. The city was first expanding in the south but later mostly in the north and now further away on the other side of the Colentina River. The city's development has been influenced by different ideas, from communistic large scale buildings and to urban sprawl or free residential spreading. The brief also highlighted the green structure and the importance of especially Lacul Herastrau, in the middle of the chain, a large green space, with different types of recreation, such as different park activities, sailing, swimming and much more.

With knowledge about the history of Bucharest and the chain of artificial lakes, I looked at the high quality *aerial views* and realized the enormous scale of this project. 25 kilometer is really a long distance and this task basically stretches through the entire city. I could also see the absence of green spaces or vegetation in general around many of the lakes.

Using *Google Street View*, while looking at the aerial views made me understand the site better. I could experience the site, even though it of course would have been better to visit it. The site looked very different from Sweden and what I'm used to, with a lot of roads being dirt roads with poor conditions and accessibility. Like stated in the competition description, the area seemed very decayed, yet still containing quite a few green spaces with large trees and smaller paths. My conclusion was that it has potential and valuable areas, but a lot of problems and decayed places and shorelines.

As an extra help, especially for competitors not visiting or knowing the site, the competition management organized an online colloquium at a *web conference*. All competitors were invited to listen, watch and ask questions. They also answered pre-submitted questions. Their main topic was to answer questions about the four detailing areas, but any question was allowed. I asked questions about the values in the areas, if there were any ecological or monumental values or other valuable areas around the lakes. Other competitors asked more detailed questions about certain roads and accessibility to certain shores. The competition management also briefly described each area, if there were anything planned in the area around, how areas are used and so on. From this I gained valuable information on the two detailing areas I was interested in focusing on and after this colloquium I decided to work with Lacul Straulesti as it had both ecological and potential recreational values, yet involving areas planned for a possible modern development with a new metro station and a hotel.

### Conclusion - What My Ideas Require

- *A main focus on Sustainable tourism and leisure*
- *An overall Sustainable and Holistic approach*
- *To Strengthen the Connectivity, linking and uniting urban areas and green spaces*
- *To be Creative and Innovative*
- *To be Connected to the site, understanding the history, highlighting values and solving issues*
- *To be clear and easy to understand*



Illustration of the Chain of Lakes along  
the Coleintina River

## CONCEPTUAL IDEAS

This competition submission required two concepts, a landscape concept, an idea for the overall urban landscape of the chain of artificial lakes and a spatial concept, explaining how to spatially design the area. The spatial concept were also to be shown as an example in one of the four detailing areas, in my case Lacul Straulesti. I worked on both ideas simultaneously, but here they are described one at a time.

### Landscape Concept

I wanted the overall concept to be well connected to the site, focusing on both the good and the bad, the valuable areas and the problems. From the research I had an idea to connect the entire chain of lakes and parks and make the whole area to a tourist attraction and give the entire area an united identity, not just bring out the best memorial or other attractions in the area.

I started by looking at inspiration, for example river and water front designs. One of those had a title that got stuck on my mind (Gaurav 2010):

*Reclaim the river*

Even if the Colentina isn't entirely unavailable, those words got stuck in my head. To me they tell us to give the river back to the people, yet letting it shine, as the water is the value. Those words got me thinking. Those words got me creative.

Looking back on my research, I thought about the different requirements my ideas needed, including connectivity and connection to the site. The connectivity could be reached by making the entire area a tourist attraction of its own, but the idea also required connection to the history, the values

and the issues of the area. Thinking about my experience in historical sites, I remembered a course I took last year, about restoring historical sites. An idea could be to restore the area to its intended purpose and give it back to everyone, *Reclaim and Restore* or *Restore and Reclaim*.

The competition theme is called (Re)Discovering the Emerald Necklace of Colentina and it is about the river that was reconstructed into a chain of artificial lakes. The Re-words felt like something I wanted to develop and elaborate more about. I thought about the different Re-words as I wasn't all satisfied with Restore and Reclaim, as it didn't bring up the values and issues of the place today.

Again, going back to the research and what I wanted and what I believe they are asking for in the competition. I settled with Restore and Reconstruct as it could:

- *Restore the purpose of the lakes*
- *Reconstruct the area around the lakes for a higher quality and connectivity.*

After one night's sleep I added Revive, as I wanted to add something new to the site, a new identity and make it both modern and sustainable. Restore, Reconstruct and Revive would therefore imply:

- *Restore the purpose of the lakes*
- *Reconstruct the area around the lakes for a higher quality and connectivity.*
- *Revive the area with a new identity and new elements*

The conceptual idea for the overall landscape was to Restore, Reconstruct and Revive the Emerald Necklace of Colentina. This is just the first idea that I then continued to work on through the inventory, analysis and proposal.

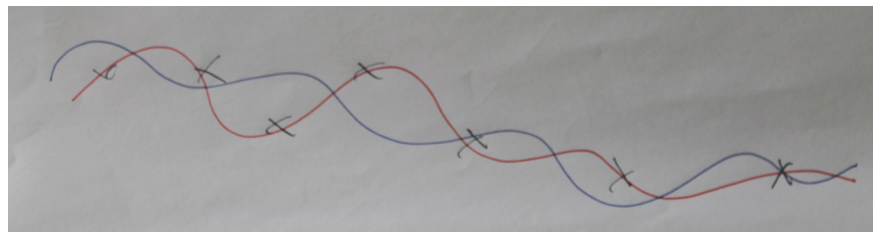


## Spatial Concept

Sustainable tourism and leisure was the main focus of The Spatial concept, but this concept is more physical than the overall landscape concept. It is about how to create a connectivity along all of the lakes, how to physically connect to the site and what elements to add or reconstruct. As mentioned before, I wanted to highlight the entire area, making the chain of lakes a tourist attraction of its own, hence the main focus of *Sustainable tourism and leisure*.

I had an idea about creating a band or necklace of activities, connected by some kind of path or uniform, repetitive element along the lakes. As inspiration I looked at *Red Ribbon Park* in China (Turenscape 2008), where a small path follows a long red bench, inspired by a red ribbon. This is a park and not at all at the same scale as the Emerald Necklace of Colentina, but it really connects the area, creates an identity and makes a former unavailable, natural and undisturbed site accessible for tourist.

From that and my own thoughts I got an idea that I could use several bands or layers along the chain of lakes, creating a necklace connecting and highlighting the values, bridging the issues and holistically giving the area a new identity and uniting areas. The necklace could for example contain different layers that together could connect to the overall landscape concept of Restore, Reconstruct and Revive. The layers or bands could follow the water which is what everything builds upon, then connect biologically and ecologically through green spaces. Then everything could



Early Conceptual Idea Sketch

be made accessible by some kind of infrastructure or tourist path passing monuments, valuable areas and different recreational activities. The layers or bands along the chain of lakes was my conceptual spatial idea, going into the next step of inventory and analysis.

## INVENTORY

With my two conceptual ideas in mind, I needed to know more about each lake, about the values in the area, the land use, existing infrastructure and so on. Since I couldn't visit the place I got most of the information from material I downloaded from the competition homepage. There were unpublished material, inventory and analysis made about the site and about every lake. I looked at maps and aerial views while reading and taking notes from the material. The documents I used most were all by LE:NOTRE Institute:

### Available Documents

- *Bucharest: The Birth of a Landscape (2014b)*
- *Water Quality Colentina (2014e)*
- *Vegetation Structure Colentina (2014f)*
- *Colentina Water System (2014g)*
- *Colentina General Analysis 1 (2014h)*
- *Colentina General Analysis 2 (2014i)*
- *Colentina General Analysis 3 (2014j)*

Most of the texts were in English but a few parts were in Romanian, in which I'd have to look at the illustrations to understand something at least.

To structure my inventory I first and foremost went

through the information about each and every lake, taking notes on values, issues, where there are green spaces and other facts. Here is an example from two of the lakes:

#### **Lacul Dobroesti**

- *Outside the boundaries of Bucharest*
- *Variety of spread out urban tissues around the lake*
- *Lack of vegetation or green spaces*
- *Almost no connection with water*

#### **Lacul Grivita**

- *Decayed facilities and park on the south shore*
- *Inexistent in public minds, it's the backyard of the close by neighborhoods*
- *Dens urban tissue on the south shore, spread out urban tissue on the north shore*
- *Vacant lands on north shore*
- *Some accessible shores, some inaccessible*

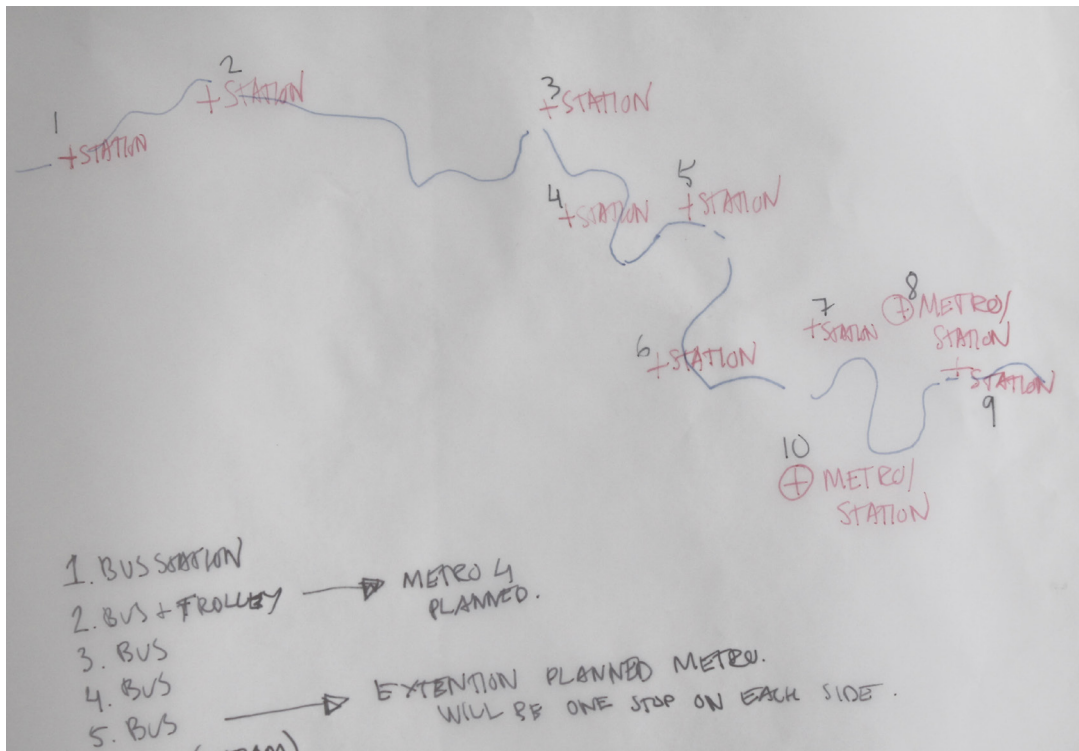
I also looked specifically on the accessibility to the shorelines. I took notes on which shores could work for adding new paths, which shores where closed and couldn't be made accessible and so on. I made a table showing the lakes, the existing situation and then later added the potential in the analysis. The table is seen under *Analysis*.

Since going through every lake one by one, I at the same time did the inventory for the whole site. I learned where the green spaces are and where they are lacking, where the problems are and what the values are. I then added some various information, that could affect the proposal and design. Here are some examples of various information:

- *Water quality is best at the western part of the chain. The longer to the east, the lower the quality because of pollution from the city.*

- Highest land value around Lacul Herastrau and Lacul Floreasca. They are both close to the city and well connected with parks or vegetation.
- Large roads are quite noisy and most bridges are used for all kinds of circulation
- Airport close to Lacul Grivita causes quite noisy

I also quickly created some maps to easily view the site as a whole, and to see where the monuments, valuable areas, and the public transportation spots are and also to show the main circulation of the site.



Quick map of the Public Transportation stations around the western part of the Chain of Lakes

## Lacul Straulesti

I also did a thorough inventory of the detailing area of Lacul Straulesti. This was made through the earlier mentioned documents and a short text called Territorial Context Stralesti Lake (LE:NOTRE Institute 2014k), webb conference information and pictures taken in the area that I downloaded from the competition homepage (LE:NOTRE Institute 2014d). I found the following facts about Lacul Straulesti:

- *Planned new metro station combined with hotel and multi-arena in the eastern part*
- *Popular living area southeast of the lake*
- *Almost no urban tissue on the shores*
- *Bus stations in both ends of the lake*
- *Western part of the lake contains wetlands*
- *There are some kind of fish in the lake*
- *Water quality better than most lakes in the chain.*
- *Bad connection to water*
- *Former park and sport facilities are decayed*
- *Vacant lands around the entire lake*
- *Industrial area southwest of the lake*
- *Located at the boarder between Bucharest and Ilfov*
- *33 ha area, 2,3 km long, 1-5 m deep*

Lacul Straulesti has a variety of land use close to the lake, yet almost all banks are on vacant land and possibly accessible by foot. The area around the lake are undeveloped, with just a few housings close to the shore. From pictures I can tell that the area is decayed in most parts.

## ANALYSIS

A lot of the material I read during the inventory also contained analysis about the site. Combined with evaluation of the information found in the inventory I analyzed the lakes one by one, just like in the inventory. Here are an example from the two lakes mentioned before:

### **Lacul Dobroesti**

- *The spread out urban tissues create holes in the city where connectivity is lost*
- *The area in the middle doesn't connect with the surroundings.*
- *More green spaces or vegetation in general are needed*
- *Some shores are vacant and could allow access, through parks or pathways*

### **Lacul Grivita**

- *Sport facilities and park are the most valuable spots around the lake, should be restored*
- *Urban tissue on the north shore are very unstructured, lacking connectivity and isolated from the city*
- *Vacant lands have high potential*
- *The shores need to be better connected, as well as the north and south side. The north side of the lake is totally cut off from the city - in the isolated periphery*

## Shore Accessibility

I then completed the table of shoreline accessibility. It shows the existing situation and the potential.

LAKE	ACCESSIBILITY	POTENTIAL
MOGOSAIA	NORTHEAST - PARK SOUTHWEST - VACANT REST - PRIVATE	RESTORE WEST RETAIN NE. BRIDGE THE GARRAGE
CHITILA	SOUTHWEST - PRIVATE THE REST - AVAILABLE	BOTH SIDES POTENTIAL
STRAULEST	OLD PARK SE. VACANT LANDS REST.	GREEN SPACES AND ACCESSIBILITY ALL AROUND
GRIVITA	SW. OLD PARK AND SPORT FACILITIES. N. SPREAD OUT HOUSING	ALLOW ACCESS NORTH. RESTORE PARK.
BANEASA	NE PRIVATE. WEST NOT ACCESS. EAST PENINSULA AVAILABLE	WEST SHORE. PENINSULA COULD BE A NEW MEETING POINT
HERASTRAU	MOST SHORES AVAILABLE AND ACCESSIBLE. PARK	IT IS GOOD
FLOREASCA	GREEN SPACES ALONG SHORE. MOSTLY PRIVATE EXCEPT EAST SHORE	ALLOW ACCESS TO CERTAIN PARTS ON NORTH SHORE
TEI	WEST PRIVATE. EAST, SOUTH AN PENINSULA AVAILABLE	DEVELOP PARK - WALK ON PENINSULA
PLUMBUIA	ACCESSIBLE SHORES ON TRAFFIC ROADS. VALUABLE CHURCH + PARK	USE PARK AREA AND EXISTING PATH
FUNDENI (I)	MOSTLY AVAILABLE SHORES. VERY POLLUTED	RESTORE.
FUNDENI (II)	MOSTLY PRIVATE EXCEPT EASTERN SHORE AND NORTH.	<del>KEEP MARKET</del> RESTORE AVAILABLE SHORES.
DOBROESTI	NORTH AND EAST PRIVATE MIDDLE AVAILABLE BUT SPREAD OUT HOUSING	GREEN LINKS AND PARKS - WATER CONNECTION
PANTELIMON (I)	NORTH MOSTLY PRIVATE. S-W AVAILABLE SE. MILITARY.	<del>USE</del> RESTORE SOUTHWEST. ALLOW VISTAS
PANTELIMON (II)	S-W PARK MOST SHORES AVAILABLE NORTH NOT CONNECTED	BRIDGE TO NORTH. RETAIN PARK.

## SWOT-Analysis

### Strengths

- *The water in itself*
- *Existing parks and other green spaces for recreation and biodiversity*
- *Monuments and valuable areas*
- *Public transportation stations close to lakes*
- *The location, through a large city*

### Weaknesses

- *The water in itself - a barrier in the city*
- *Lack of identity*
- *Lack of green spaces*
- *Lack of connectivity*
- *Decaying environments*
- *Cut up urban landscape*
- *Heavy traffic*
- *Few tourist attraction, most of them centered around Lacul Herastrau*
- *Water quality is moderate*

### Opportunities

- *A new identity making the Emerald Necklace of Colentina a tourist attraction of its own*
- *Tourism, different attractions and ecotourism*
- *A connected area that unites urban areas and the city center and the periphery*
- *Social areas*
- *Sustainable functions and traffic*
- *Ecosystem services*
- *Recreational areas and paths along the chain*
- *Bridging the water barrier*

### Threats

- *Continuous cut up urban landscape, where the Colentina river separates the city from the periphery*
- *Continues decay of the area*
- *Increased crime and insecurity*
- *Increased pollution*
- *Flooding*
- *Decreased air quality*
- *Decreased water quality*

Conclusion of the analysis is that the area varies a lot in quality, experience and use, where some lakes and their surroundings are well used for recreation and tourism while others are just decayed or their shores are privatized. Most of the lakes and their surroundings need some kind of restoration or reviving, and just a few valuable areas can be retained as they are.

In general, the entire site is lacking identity, green spaces and connectivity. The water creates a large barrier in the urban landscape. If nothing is done, it will probably continue to be a cut up urban landscape, with mostly decayed parts, higher crime rates, decreased quality and only a few valuable areas and monuments. At the same time the area has great potential. With a new identity and restoration of the area, the values of it can increase. Nature and green spaces will together with new paths and elements increase the connectivity, enabling places for recreation, ecotourism and other tourist attractions, more ecosystem services, social activities and a joint area that connects the urban landscape.

## Lacul Straulesti

Analyzing the area after doing the inventory, lead me to the following conclusions:

- *The multi station in the eastern part could bring people to the lake and perhaps the station can be combined with recreational activities*
- *Easy access to the area through public transportation*
- *High biological values in the wetlands*
- *Potential green spaces around the entire lake and urban tissues further away from the lake. Swimming, fishing sailing and other water activities are possible in the lake*

- *Former park contains large trees that can be preserved*
- *Possible accessibility to lake, both north and south shore*
- *The lake is located quite far west on the chain of lakes and may need easy access through public transportation to get well used*

The primary issues of the area is the lack of use today. It's a decayed area, quite far away from the city center and some of the parts around the lake aren't very accessible.

The highest values of the area today are the wetlands in the western part and the existing green spaces, even though they are decayed. Tourists and Bucharesters could be able to experience parks, nature and wildlife on the site. Other values are the closeness to public transportation that will be even better with the planned new multi station. A lot of vacant lands give the area high potential for restoration and revival.

## Theoretical Research

To find more arguments for my ideas I had to do some theoretical research that was outside the competition research, yet important for my submission. This theoretical research was mainly about Ecotourism and Ecosystem services, subjects I briefly knew what it was, but needed to go deeper in their meaning. Here are short briefs of the two concepts or ecotourism and ecosystem services.

### **Ecotourism**

Ecotourism was to me a way to let people experience nature, but the ecotourism concept is more about the preservation and respect for the existing and usually undisturbed nature. As described by the International ecotourism society, TIES (2015) Ecotourism is:

*Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education.*

Ecotourism is about awareness and respect for nature and people living in the area, but also about doing minimal impact in the wild life. It should also educate and give positive experiences.

The Colentina River and Lacul Straulesti need to be restored and revived, yet some parts can be retained and used for ecotourism, especially the wetlands in the western part of Lacul Straulesti.

### **Ecosystem services**

According to Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (Naturvårdsverket 2014a, my translation), Ecosystem Services are:

*The ecosystems direct or indirect contribution to human well-being.*

Ecosystem services are things that the nature brings that are good for us humans. Swedish Environmental Protection Agency bring up a lot of those services, here are a few of those:

In and close to water (Naturvårdsverket 2014b)

- *Water supply*
- *Cleaning water*
- *Nature experiences and recreation*
- *Biodiversity - especially where land and water converge*

Nature (Naturvårdsverket 2014c)

- *Pollination and food*
- *Recreation*
- *Biodiversity*

- *Health and climate benefits*
- *Storm water cleaning and delay*
- *Beauty of its own*

My conclusion is that an investment in green spaces is an investment in the human well-being. These are all arguments for adding more green spaces in the area, especially in the vacant lands.

## PROPOSAL

During the entire inventory and analysis I have been processing my conceptual ideas and thought about how to improve or change them.

My overall landscape concept, which I earlier called Restore, Reconstruct and Revive, I decided to change to Retain, Restore and Revive. The reason for that was that reconstruct and revive are pretty much the same thing, yet revive sounds more positive in my opinion. I also wanted to retain some areas, like the existing parks around Lacul Herastrau, that are valuable areas today. Other areas could be restored to the original purpose of the reconstruction of Colentina, which would implicate new and old green spaces and sports facilities. Finally reviving the area adding new elements and identity to the area.

Combining those could allow tourism and ecotourism, recreation and different activities, while at the same time connecting the entire Emerald Necklace of Colentina. The concept would consequently be:

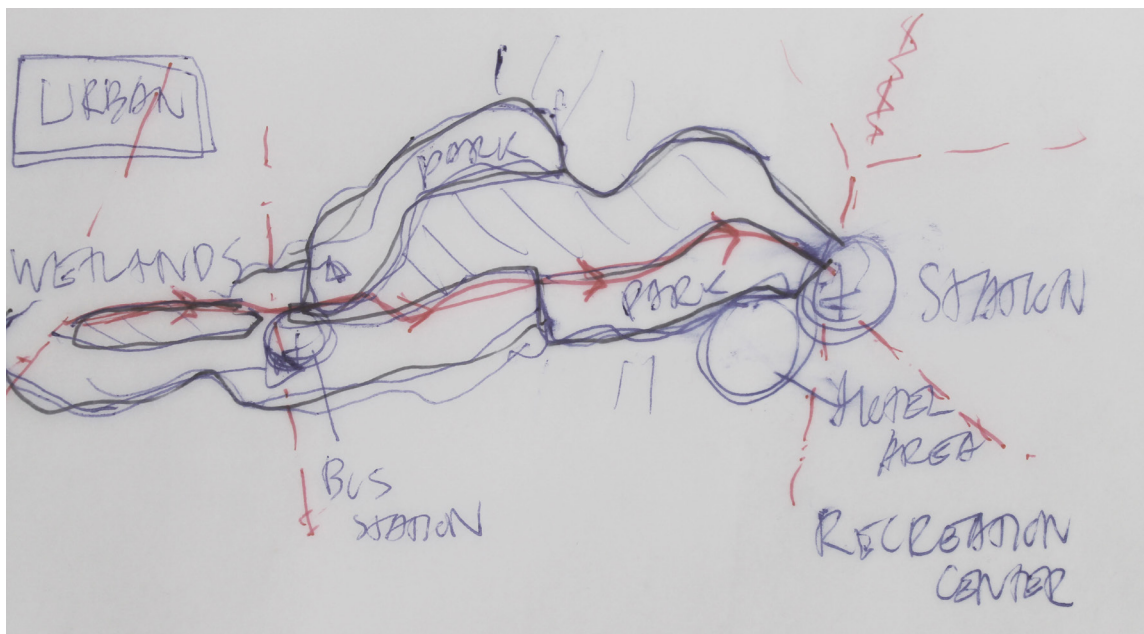
*RETAIN the valuable areas and monuments.*

*RESTORE the vacant lands and available shores into accessible, green spaces with higher biological, ecological and recreational values*

*REVIVE the area to a social meeting area with new values for sustainable tourism and recreation.*

I then applied the concept to every lake, shortly defining a vision for each and every lake and if they should be retained, restored and/or revived.

For the detailing area of Lacul Straulesti I had to be especially detailed in defining the vision. It was in that area I also had to show how it all would work physically and how things would shape and connect. Both the landscape concept and the spatial concept would be explained in the detailing plan.



Quick sketch of Lacul Straulesti, showing an idea of circulation and possible landuse.

For the spatial concept of sustainable tourism and leisure I primary focused on the revival of the area, but also retaining and restoration. Going back to the conceptual idea, my I had ideas about different layers or bands along the chain of lakes.

A main idea I had was to create a pathway for cyclists and pedestrians, leading people along the Colentina River and passing different activities, parks and other tourist attractions. Then adding other layers to that, like green spaces and vegetation, infrastructure and urbanism. At first the spatial concept had five layers, each with several aspects or arguments of what their purpose is in this proposal:

### **Water**

- *Visual values, recreational and tranquil*
- *Physical values, activities, recreation, healing*
- *Biological and ecological values*
- *Ecosystem services*

### **Identity**

- *Tourism and leisure*
- *Pathway - connecting*
- *Iconic elements*

### **Greens**

- *Green spaces, parks, vegetation*
- *Biological and ecological values*
- *Recreational values*
- *Social meeting points*
- *Activities*

### **Urbanism**

- *Unite city*
- *Connectivity*
- *Breaking barriers*
- *Socially connecting different areas and people*

### **Infrastructure**

- *Connecting urban areas*
- *Connecting city center and periphery*
- *Making Colentina accessible*
- *Priority walking, biking and public transportation*

This was a very comprehensive idea, where I included everything listed in the competition program. I didn't want to miss out on anything. But at the same time I would not manage creating a design involving all of the above and I also had a main focus of sustainable tourism and leisure. After consulting with my supervisor I decided to focus on sustainable tourism and leisure, and reduce the extent to what I was inspired to do on this site. That meant I gave more room for the pathway and saw the infrastructure as a part of that. I also decided to see the overall concept as a way to connect the cut up urban landscape, especially since urban design isn't my main focus as a landscape architect and I didn't have the time to get more knowledge about the area and urban development. After continuous work on the layering idea, it could be described like this, again with several aspects of what their purpose would be on the site:

### **Water**

- *Visual aspects*
- *Recreation and activities*
- *Biological and ecological aspects*
- *Ecosystem services*

### **Green Infrastructure**

- *Nature, park, green spaces*
- *Recreation and activities*
- *Connectivity*
- *Health*
- *Enhanced microclimate*
- *Biological and ecological aspects*
- *Ecosystem services*
- *Ecotourism*

### **Identity and Tourism**

- *New identity*
- *Connectivity*
- *Tourism focus*
- *Holistic area*
- *Social aspects*
- *Pathway of Colentina*
- *Ecotourism*
- *Pedestrians and cyclists priority*
- *Sustainable infrastructure*
- *New bridges and nodes*

Together with the overall concept of Retain, Restore and Revive the tree layers completed the spatial concept of Sustainable Tourism and Leisure.

Continuing the proposal, I had to define where new elements would be added, what areas would be retained, restored and revived, where the pathway would go and what it would contain. To create a new identity and make Colentina a tourist attraction of its own, I created a series of elements that could be added to the pathway of Colentina, later called the Colentina Pathway. My idea was that the series of elements, for example furniture and signs, could highlight the river and the area and that it could connect the area in people's minds. I wanted the design of the elements to be unique but uniform, to strengthen the identity and the holistic experience. To do this I used a color theme - yellow

- and tried to make a design that could be adapted by the different elements. I started with the lightpoles and had an idea that they could bend over the pathway, creating the feeling of an open pipe or tunnel and also a feeling of life and playfulness. I thought the path could be an open tunnel for sustainable circulation and that the shape in itself would be unique for this place. I then adapted this bending shape to the other elements.

The idea was also that the pathway could create a connection to water at many sections of the shorelines, going through and exploring the nature at other sections. The Colentina Pathway would also pass activity and recreation areas, monuments and other valuable areas, connect to public transport stations and allow shortcuts along the river and over bridges only for pedestrians and cyclists.

To do this I had to clearly define the whole path, all green spaces, both existing and new and where important connections, nodes and landmarks are located. I also wanted the pathway to have a somewhat meandering shape and that the pathway could switch in physical form, between boardwalks, existing paths, and new gravel or asphalt paths.

After defining both concepts and sketching plans and details, I was ready to start the visual design and presentation.

## PRESENTATION

When creating the presentation of the two double A1-posters I used knowledge and experience from my bachelor's thesis where I looked at winning proposals to examine what they have in common. Since I examined proposals of plazas, the similarities were mostly useful when it comes to visual design. As I said in the conclusion (Wedlin 2013), there were eight clear similarities applying to all or most of the proposals; Flexibility, lighting detailing, geometrical design, coherent groundcovers, specially-designed seating, night and/or winter perspective, flume/water feature and small illustration images. In creating the presentation, the most interesting

ones were lighting detailing, winter/night perspective and small illustration images. I kept these in mind.

Available material for visual design and presentation was photos from the site, aerial views, scaling plans of detailing areas and ArcGIS-files. There were no dwg-file available.

## Layout

I started off with the layout, to see how much room the different plans would take. I realized the landscape plan would cover almost the entire double A1 poster, where the Colentina River would go in a diagonal from the upper left corner down towards the lower right corner. To get a more suitable layout I turned the plan 20 degrees, which enabled room for text at the bottom 1/4, while plans and illustrations would be at the top 3/4.

The font I choose for the titles was a bold uppercase font and the idea was that it would be clear on any background. I then choose a font for the text body that suited the title font.

### **Landscape plan**

My main focus on the landscape plan was to shortly describe each lake according to the concept of Retain, Roestore and Rivive and then show the three layers of Water, Green Infrastructure and Identity and Tourism (The Colentina Pathway). My intention was to show the aerial view in gray as a background, yet allowing the focus to be the overall landscape concept, the spatial concept and then describing most of it in text. Since my proposal is about Sustainable Tourism and Leisure, and the scale is 1: 25000, it would be hard to detail it without losing the clarity. I therefore decided to keep it simple and quite minimalistic.

### **Spatial plan**

My main focus on the spatial plan was to show the different

elements, like green spaces, different tourist attractions and activities, as well as the Colentina Pathway. The hardest part was the multi station and multi arena and hotel in the eastern part, as I knew I had to add some design, yet didn't want to exploit too much area or do too big changes.

My aim was to make the spatial plan look a bit like the landscape plan in style, but the spatial plan was much more detailed and I had to highlight much more of the total area. I also used words to describe different parts of the plans.

### **Illustrations and 3D Drawings**

I created small diagrams to clearly explain traffic and circulation, urbanity development, green infrastructure and functionality. I also created sections to show the Colentina Pathway and the different objects highlighting the pathway and giving the area a new identity.

I also created 3D drawings and photo collages, using pictures from the site. My intention with the 3D drawings was to show how the area can be used and how it will be experienced, at the same time as showing a variety of environments, existing and new.

## COMPARISON WITH WINNING PROPOSALS

To get a hint of what I could have done better I intended to compare my proposal to the winning proposal. To do this I would have to wait until after the competition award that was held at the LE:NOTRE Landscape Forum in the end of april (LE:NOTRE Institute 2015).

On april 29th all competitors got an email with a brief of the winning proposals, from first to fifth place. The winning proposals showed a wide spectrum of ideas. Since it was only briefs of the actual competition submissions, it was hard to go very deep in comparing the proposals with my proposal, I just tried to see what they did that I didn't.

# 02

Working process  
and Competition  
results

Background illustration showing  
possible recreation in the park.  
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# COMPETITION RESULTS

This section consists of a brief description of my competition submission called *Retain, Restore and Revive* and my result with scores and comments in the jury evaluation of the LE:NOTRE Student Competition.

My competition submission called Retain, Restore and Revive is the result of the process, trying to create an innovative and unique proposal that fulfills the aims and requirements of the competition. The competition submission is the other part of this master's thesis and not added in this written composition.

Following next is a short description of my submission and a description of how it was evaluated by the jury, in other words, my competition result.

## COMPETITION SUBMISSION

The following is a quote from introduction of my submission called Retain, Restore and Revive (Wedlin 2015), giving a brief of the main idea:

*For the purpose of water supply, irrigation, fishing and primary leisure, the Colentina river was reconstructed into an emerald necklace of artificial lakes during the 20th century. Now, many years later it's more of a barrier that divides the metropolitan area of Ilfov and Bucharest into two and separates the periphery from the city. Colentina needs to RETAIN its values, RESTORE its purpose and REVIVE into a social meeting area for activity and recreation - both for tourists and Bucharesters.*

Retain, Restore and Revive builds on the original purpose of the lakes, yet adds something new in its vision. It's about highlighting and retaining the values, solving issues and restoring areas into their intended purpose and reviving the area through new sustainable elements.

The vision is to (Wedlin 2015):

*RETAIN the valuable areas and monuments.*

*RESTORE the vacant lands and available shores into accessible, green spaces with higher biological, ecological and recreational values*

*REVIVE the area to a social meeting area with new values for sustainable tourism and recreation.*

Further, the vision builds upon the concept of Sustainable Tourism and Recreation and the three layers, Water, Green Infrastructure and Identity and tourism. Together they change the detailing area of Straulesti, as described in the submission (Wedlin 2015):

*The area will be RESTORED by creating new parks and green spaces and a place far from the vacant and idle site that Straulesti lake is today.*

*Existing values will be RETAINED and enhanced, offering leisure and activities.*

*Straulesti will also be REVIVED, adding new values to increase the experiences of the area, with new tourist attractions and a new places for people to meet, interact, unite as well as get involved with each other and the nature in a sustainable way.*

*The reconstruction will reclaim the lake, offering the people a diverse scenery of both existing and new valuable nature and modern, active, urban areas.*

This is just a brief of the competition submission. The entire submission is available at Epsilon SLU (KÄLLA).

## EVALUATION

The jury selection consisted of two rounds. In the first round two randomly selected jury members, evaluators, evaluated each submission according to five criteria and graded each criterion from 1-4, 4 being the highest. To reach the final round you needed a score of 32 out of 40. Every evaluator left comments on every criterion. Here are the results<sup>4</sup>:

### Evaluator 1:

1. Connection to the site 4/4

*The approach is based on each lake characteristics. The intervention criteria are formulated for each area.*

2. Creativity 2/4

*The creativity of the project consists in linking the levels considered as main areas of intervention*

3. Concept and Method 4/4

*Systemically approach based on the analyzes of existing situation. Concept and method - results of the observations and of the identification of the urban needs*

4. Holistic approach 3/4

*The project is based on a multidisciplinary approach on 3 levels of intervention - cultural, environmental and social.*

5. Visual quality 3/4

*Graphic representation rich in information, well structured on the plan. Good readability of the project.*

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Final evaluation 16/20

*Project well structured, argued, proposal anchored in the context. Lack of imagination in terms of urban design and detail of intervention.*

## Evaluator 2:

1. Connection to the site 2/4

*The project is mainly focused on the east-west direction and misses worked out connections to the north and south.*

2. Creativity 2/4

*The proposal consists mainly in the addition of the so-called "Colentina Pathway" with a range of different street furniture, which makes it rather constrained.*

3. Concept and Method 1/4

*see criterion 2*

4. Holistic approach 2/4

*The proposal lacks of sustainable connections between city- and waterscape and between different potential "actors"*

5. Visual quality 3/4

*Nice plans and comprehensible images*

Final evaluation 10/20

*The proposal gives no coherent answer to the asked questions of an "cut up" urban landscape.*

My score was **26** out of 40. I did not reach the final round.

# 03

## Discussion and Evaluation

Background photo showing a  
section of the Colentina Pathway.  
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# DISCUSSION AND EVALUATION

In this section will discuss and evaluate the aim and main issue, the design and sketch process, the competition selection, the secondary issues, a summary of the results and lastly, my own personal experience.

The structure of this discussion and evaluation is that I first and foremost will discuss the aim and main issue of this master's thesis. Then I will discuss the secondary issues, which are all more connected to the specific competition I entered and after that I will summarize and evaluate the results and compare my submission to the winning submissions of LE:NOTRE Student competition. Lastly, I will discuss my own personal experience of this master's thesis.

## AIM AND MAIN ISSUE

Aim of this master's thesis was to through an introspection examine a competitor's view of the international competition and how to approach the difficulties concerning international competitions and then through that examination obtain experience about the international architectural competition as part of the profession of landscape architects and other involved professions. The main issue was:

**How do I experience the competitor's perspective of an international architectural competition and what are the main difficulties?**

I did this examination through an introspection of my own process in completing a competition submission and competing in the LE:NOTRE Student Competition, which means the answer to this issue and the secondary issues are based on my own experiences, feelings, decisions and specific problems.

## Main Difficulties

Competing in this international competition I encountered both difficulties and new experiences. Starting with the main difficulties about being a competitor in an international architectural competition I found that there are both general difficulties about being a competitor

and difficulties specific to the competition I entered, LE:NOTRE Student Competition. I would say the three main difficulties of international architectural competitions are:

- *Formalities, documents, platforms used etc*
- *Your own background and experiences*
- *Specific difficulties linked to the task, aim and site*

The first main difficulty is everything that isn't about creating a competition submission, but still is of importance for submitting an entry in the end. It can be everything from formalities and language to the available documents or platforms used. I found it particularly hard to make sure I got my competition submission submitted and uploaded at the right place, including all requirements, all forms and files. It is probably the same in all competitions, but in an international competition it might be different to what you are used to, which was the case for me in this competition. The available material wasn't in formats I'm used to working with, the platform was new to me and I've never taken part in an online colloquium before. When entering a competition, it's good to be aware of that and perhaps take some extra time making sure you understand how everything works.

The second difficulty I call *Your own background and experiences* which I think is very much about the internationality. Whatever country you come from you have your own background and experiences. When seeing a map or a picture, you picture it as it would look or be experienced if it was somewhere you know. To me, I pictured some areas in a certain way, but then later seeing how it really looked, it was quite different from what I thought. The same applies to use; nature or a park in Romania might not be used the same way as nature or a park in Sweden. Another aspect of your own background and experiences is how you approach tasks and design places. Everyone has their own way of doing this. Myself, I approached this task from my own experiences, trying to design a place rather than planning

it. The reason is probably my background of smaller scaled projects where it's much more important to design a place, than to plan a development of an entire area.

Lastly, there are specific difficulties linked to the task, aim and site of the international architectural competition. Depending on these factors, it can be difficult in different ways. These are further discussed under Secondary Issues.

## Experiences of the Competitor's Perspective

Competing in an international competition I experienced the competitors perspective of it.

An international architectural competition from a competitors perspective is also very fair, in every way it can be fair. Nobody is given any advantages when it comes to the task, information, requirements or anything. The only advantage someone could have is to know the site and have been to it. Since I couldn't visit it I had to do more research about the site, trying to understand it. Those who could call the international competition a national competition, probably know the area better, now the conditions and have an advantage because of that.

An international architectural competition can be stressful. Not knowing the area is one thing, not having enough time since it's usually not your main task might be another. And then add all difficulties to that.

As a competitor in an international architectural competition I felt like I was part of something big and important. The internationality adds an excitement as it is something different, it is bigger than a regular competition and it might get publicity in many countries.

At the same time as being part of something big, you feel quite small, competing with people from all over the world. I might have been competing with very high skilled landscape architects, more experienced and in bigger teams. In that situation you need to believe in yourself and that's what I did. I did it my way.

## Competitors's Perspective - Specific or General

As I mentioned before, I did this examination as an introspection, examining a competitor's view of the international architectural competition through my own participation and experiences of competing in one. I did this because I wanted to participate in a real competition before graduating as a landscape architect, yet at the same time I wanted to study competitions from a competitor's view as a further development of my bachelor's thesis where I studied winning competition submissions. Doing an introspection and examining my own process, I found a competitor's view of an international architectural competition, but it might be specific to me and not a general competitor's view. To get a more general view, an idea could be to interview several competitors or create surveys for competitors of different competitions to answer and then try to summarize it all into a general conclusion of a competitor's view of an international architectural competition. Both methods will examine a competitor's perspective. The weakness of my examination is that it's not a general view, but if I would have examined a competitor's view through interviews or survey or in some other way, I wouldn't have experienced a real architectural competition of my own which might have made it hard to discuss the answers or make conclusion. I think it was necessary for me to both compete and reflect about it, to fully understand the difficulties of international competitions and obtain experiences about it. With more time, the thesis could be further developed with surveys and interviews and then combine that with my own experiences, to get a general view of a competitor's view of the international architectural competition.

## Problem Statement

Going back to the problem statement in the introduction, working on a competition is quite different from working on a usual project with a client:

*To compete in a architectural competition means to work towards an unknown goal, where it in contrast to working with a client and its opinions and continuous feedback is all about interpret the competition's program, aims and the situation, yet at the same time be innovative and unique. Main problem of architectural competitions is to do just that; to submit a unique and special proposal, yet to be spot on with the competition management's and jury's thoughts about the competition task and how it can or ought to be solved.*

In a competition it is like you have one shot and if you get it wrong you are out. Unless you are working on a team it might be hard to test your ideas when you are in the process of completing a submission. Working alone in this competition, I found myself quite insecure at times, not knowing if I was on the right track or totally off. When working with a client, there are always time to discuss the ideas and in what direction it should develop. It is an ongoing process, with a less clear starting and ending point than a competition. Those are two different ways to create architecture, both important for the profession.

## The Wider Perspective

Architectural competitions can surely be a way to find new, innovative and creative ideas to solve problems or create interesting and exciting architecture and environments for people.

As mentioned above, architectural competitions and regular architectural work is quite different in the work process. The question is though, which way leads to the highest quality architecture? The creative competition

proposals where the aim is to be innovative and unique, or the more site or client specific design where the proposal can develop over time? The winning competition proposal can of course be further elaborated later, but I still think the answer to the question depends on the goal. If the goal is to get unique ideas for something, then why not arrange an architectural competition and get several proposals with the aim of being innovative and creative. If the goal is to get the best suiting design for a certain client, then maybe it's better to have an ongoing discussion with an architect or landscape architect directly, without arranging a competition first.

LE:NOTRE Institute only had benefits in arranging a competition, since their main goal was to promote<sup>5</sup>:

- *Promote the European dimension of landscape architecture, raise European consciousness among young people*
- *Promote interdisciplinary approaches to complex challenges in the urban/rural interface*
- *Promote strategic and conceptual thinking and integrative approaches, combine planning and design skills for addressing complex situations*
- *Raise awareness for the objectives of LE:NOTRE Institute and the landscape forum*
- *Create knowledge on the forum theme*

It was also an ideas competition, where all the proposals would be part of an exhibition and thereby subjects for discussion at the LE:NOTRE Landscape Forum (LE:NOTRE Institute 2015). To sum it up, the competition has created publicity for LE:NOTRE Institute and the forum, possibly leading to landscape discussions and development of landscape architecture in general.

When it comes to international competitions, what does the internationality really add to the element of competitions and how does it develop architecture? It promotes a site, a client or an institution globally and it can possibly lead to a

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wider range of innovative proposals. At the same time, it is not unlikely that architecture gets more globally generalized and less culturally different, which I think would be degrading rather than developing. In student competitions it's probably not going to happen, but with bigger architect and landscape architect firms competing globally, it could certainly be a threat to diverse architecture. That said, I think it's a less threat in landscape architecture, since you have to adapt the existing environment to the design, yet this is something that could be discussed and studied more.

## Examine and Compete

The aim of this master's thesis was to examine the competitor's perspective of the international architectural competition and this was done through an introspection of my own process in completing a competition submission.

Working on my competition submission I sometimes lost the aim or the main focus, and tried to make the ultimate submission instead of learning how the international architectural competition works and what difficulties it contains. Even though I always knew the outcome wasn't important, I still wanted to create something that I would be satisfied with and I also wanted to go through the rounds of the jury selection, to get the whole process from competition description to the final.

I many times had to stop and think about the aim and what's important for this thesis. The lack of time for completing the submission made me work hard on the design, and sometimes not focusing enough on what I am doing and what. In that way, it might have been better to do the examination of a competitor's perspective in another way, or perhaps working together with someone could have helped. Then at least one person could always make sure to think about the aim and the process, rather than creating the best possible competition submission for the competition.

## DESIGN AND SKETCH PROCESS

To create my competition proposal I worked with my modified version of the Inventory-Analysis-Proposal Design method. It's a method we have been practicing a lot during the education at the landscape architecture program at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. I chose to use this method as a way to practice it one more time, before going out in the world to work as a landscape architect. I also chose this method because I knew I am comfortable with its process, especially my own modified version. Since I didn't have much time working on this competition proposal it felt like the best way to actually focus on design, while at the same time experiencing the competitor's perspective of an international architectural competition.

At the same time, it might have been a good opportunity to try another design method. This competition was an ideas competition, and doing something crazy or different might just have been good for my proposal. On the other hand it could have been both harder and taken more time, it's impossible to say now.

### **Choices During the Design Process**

During the different steps I did quite a few choices that probably affected the design of my competition submission as well. In the initial research I decided to work with the main theme of Sustainable Tourism and Leisure, again because it felt like it was something I am interested in and something I know quite a lot about. The other alternatives were interesting, but seemed harder from my personal perspective.

When doing the inventory and analysis I did very thoroughgoing literature studies to understand the place. With hindsight, I probably spent too much time on this. When working on it, I found it important to really understand the area and to know the values and obstacles of every lake, but perhaps I could have spent a little bit less time on this

and get more time to detail the spatial concept even more. Because of all the research I did, I also focused more on the entire area than the detailing area, even though it was much harder to get detailed enough in the 1:25000 landscape plan. Optimum would have been to spend as much time as I did on the landscape concept and the landscape plan on the spatial concept and the spatial plan as well. With the time I had I probably spent too much time on the landscape plan, making the spatial plan less detailed then it should have been.

Another aspect about the analysis step was the different analysis methods I used. As mentioned above a lot was made through literature studies, but I also did a SWOT-analysis and a Shoreline Accessibility analysis. The Shoreline Accessibility analysis felt important because I wanted to link the area with pathways and green spaces and it made it easier to actually design and define the route of the path. The SWOT-analysis became more of a summary of the assembled information, where I clearly could see the values and issues of the place and each lake. I could have done some other analysis, but again I chose something I felt familiar with and that I knew wouldn't take too much time.

Quite a few of this choices are made because of the lack of time I had for this project, but with other choices I might have had more time for other parts of the design process. When I look back at it, I think I have played it too safe. I didn't take any risks in the design process choices. To challenge myself more and maybe get a more creative and innovative proposal an idea could have been to not go for the alternatives I am most familiar with. That's a lesson for next time I compete in a competition.

### **Sketching and Detailed Design**

The sketching process initially started in my mind when doing research about the competition, but it was not until the conceptual ideas step I really started generating ideas.

A key source in generating ideas was the inspiration search. I didn't see any project as large in scale as this project of 25 kilometer, but I looked at similar projects and landscape architecture in general. I found this really released my creativity, thinking of possible ideas and solutions. On the other hand it also affected my designs and in the end they might not have been the most unique and innovative, but for this scale it didn't seem like anything I have seen before. Another way could have been to not look at inspiration at all, but instead try to just work with the intuition, not at all thinking about what's possible and impossible. That could have made my proposal more unique but also less viable.

When sketching and detailing the proposal after doing all the research and analyses, I had to decide how these ideas will physically materialize and shape. From the beginning I wanted a playful and unique form of things, that would contrast against the geometrical urban parts of the area. I The meandering shape of the chain of lakes was something I found important for the area and I wanted the pathway to strengthen this shape. That set the shape for the pathway. For the details and furnitures I had the open tunnel idea, where cyclists and pedestrians could move safe and fast if they want, with signs, garbage bins and benches highlighting the route and the chain of lakes. Yet, at the same time the open tunnel allowed connections and vistas over lakes and green spaces and recreation around the path.

I think I managed to create unique details and would give a new identity to the place and that it would make the entire area a tourist attraction. At the same time, I can also see how the pathway and especially the furnitures and elements takes a lot of focus, where as the other aspects of the proposal are a bit shadowed by them. My overall concept is Retain, Restore and Revive, but the revival gets the most attention.

In the presentation of the proposal my main focus was to be clear and make it easy to understand. I also thought about the winning proposal similarities that I found in my bachelor's thesis (Wedlin 2013) and tried to use that knowledge.

## COMPETITION SELECTION

To select what competition I would enter, I looked at the competitions that would take place in the first months of 2015. I wanted it to be an international competition, mostly to challenge myself but also to experience the international scene of landscape architecture. I had never been in an international architectural competition before and thought that not many students and not all landscape architects have been in one, which could make this examination interesting to others but me.

There were not many competitions open at this time, especially not for students. When I came across this one, LE:NOTRE Student Competition, I first thought it was perfect in time with a deadline in March and awards and exhibition in late April. The competition seemed very complex and probably aimed too much towards landscape planning, which isn't something I have done much before. After a second thought, I thought this would be a good time to try landscape planning and challenge myself and do something I normally don't do and decided to go for it.

### **International Student Competition**

A small dilemma with entering the LE:NOTRE Student Competition was the fact that it's not exactly an international architectural competition, but an international student competition aimed towards landscape architecture. The examination I do of this competition and the conclusions I make from doing this applies to an international student competition, which in some ways will be quite different from a regular architectural competition for regular landscape architects. I have not looked at the differences that might be. At the same time, I'm not doing a general examination of the competitor's perspective, but my own specific examination of my perspective of the LE:NOTRE Student Competition and I still think this could be interesting for anyone entering or thinking about entering an international competition.

## SECONDARY ISSUES

In the end of January, 2015, I had the idea of joining an international architectural competition to get an understanding of the competitor's view of a competition. There and then, I knew I had to start the working process in creating a competition submission as soon as possible, since the deadline was set to March 8th. This lead me to create a work plan and defining the issues of the thesis very quickly.

Starting off the work process I thought about the issues and realized they weren't specified on the aim of this thesis: studying a competitor's view of an international architectural competition. I therefore summarized this in a a main question, which I added to the issues of this master's thesis. This resulted in the following five issues, the first one being the main issue and the other four being secondary issues:

- **What are the main difficulties in an international architectural competition and what experiences do I obtain from my participation in an international architectural competition?**
- *How do I create an innovative and unique proposal that fulfills the aims and requirements of the competition?*
- *How can I create an understanding of a site and how it is experienced, without visiting it?*
- *What are the difficulties in creating a competition submission in LE:NOTRE Student Competition?*
- *How is my proposal different from the winning proposals and what conclusions come from that?*

The main issue has already been discussed in the previous page. The fifth issue is discussed in *Summary of the Results*.

These three secondary issues are indirectly answered in detail in *PART 02 - Working Process and Competition Results*. Here follows the discussion and reflection on that.

How do I create an innovative and unique proposal that fulfills the aims and requirements of the competition?

First of all, fulfilling the requirements of the competition was the easiest part of the issue. The competition program had a list of requirements and "all" I had to do was make sure my submission met those requirements. It meant I had to create a couple of plans and illustrations, describe the proposal in text and a couple of formalities, such as an anonymous ID and an authors declaration. I knew that I would be able to meet all requirements and since it was obligate to fulfill the requirements to be able to have the submission evaluated in the jury selection, I know that I managed to do this.

It is the other parts of the issue that are harder to fulfill; to be innovative and unique, yet reach the aims of the competition. Reaching the aim can be done in many ways, the problem is finding out how, especially since the aim mentions so many different aspects and at the same time allows individual interpretation. Here is my summarization of the aim again:

*The aim is to create a vision to develop the 25 kilometer chain of artificial lakes along the Colentina river, into a sustainable and holistic area, connecting the city center and the urban periphery. The vision should be to turn the Colentina river into a well-used blue and green space, joining urban areas and uniting the people of Bucharest. The proposals should include sustainable traffic solutions, tourism, recreational and ecological functions in the area.*

Did I fulfill the aim of the competition and how? Without discussing the outcome of the competition my belief is that I fulfilled the aim as well as I could. I realized quite early that the aims of the competition included many aspects, some being very general, while others being very specific. Because of that I tried to find the key aspects, while I also choose to concentrate on the main focus of Sustainable Tourism and Leisure, as that was the main focus I thought suited me best.

At last, trying to be innovative and unique. That almost feels like the impossible task. It feels like whatever it is, someone did something similar before, or it is just too different to actually work. At the same time, no tasks are exactly the same and all ideas are usually differently developed depending on different factors for example, requirements, aim or just experience of the architect. To me, the important part was the connection to the site and my idea was to get inspiration, apply my idea to the task and the site. I also tried to approach the task from a landscape architect's perspective and not a landscape planner. My intention was to design a place, rather than plan how different areas could be used and developed. I designed an area with different functions, experiences and environments, regardless of the huge scale, and that was my way of being innovative and unique.

To sum it all up, there are multiple ways to create an innovative and unique proposal that fulfills the aims and requirements of the competition and it all comes down to a lot of interpretation and decisions. Interpreting the aims of a competition and deciding how to reach them, deciding which ideas to develop, while trying to be innovative and unique. My way of answering the question is described in Working Process and the result of that is the proposal called Retain, Restore and Revive. I created an innovative and unique proposal that fulfills the aims and requirements of the competition, but the jury wanted something else<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Beacuse of copyright issues I can not show the winning \$\$\$\$\$\$ proposals

How can I create an understanding of a site and how it is experienced, without visiting it?

The task of LE:NOTRE Student Competition was to rediscover the Emerald Necklace of Colentina, which is located in Bucharest, Romania. Romania is part of Europe, but still very far from Uppsala, Sweden where I am at. The climate and environment are different, the political and economical situation is different and the way people use public places is probably also different.

Understanding a site in a country you have never been to, without visiting it is hard. I couldn't just create an idea and apply it to the site, as if it was a place I knew. First, I had to understand it by reading a history brief, look at aerial views and maps, look at the place in Google Street View and trying to find out more through a web conference, arranged by the LE:NOTRE Institute.

After doing this, I had an understanding of the site and how it is experienced, but this understanding is based on text documents, pictures and opinions of persons in the competition committee, arranging the competition. Looking at pictures and Google Street View, I created an understanding of how I would experience the place. And in the end, my understanding is a summary of it all together and how I think it is experienced. This doesn't really mean this is the way it really is experienced. Someone living in the area might have a different opinion of the Colentina River and how the environment is experienced and their understanding of the site are at least as valuable as mine, if not more valuable.

Visiting the area would have been optimally to really understand and experience the area and through that knowing how to change and develop it, but with the given circumstances and the question asked, I did what I could to create my own understanding.

## What are the difficulties in creating a competition submission in LE:NOTRE Student Competition?

There are many difficulties and perhaps obstacles in creating a competition submissions. Some of them might be general and apply to all competitions, while others are specific to a certain competition. Since I only participated in one international architectural competition, I can only make a reflection about my difficulties creating a submission in LE:NOTRE Student Competition.

Two general difficulties have already been mentioned; fulfilling the aims of the competition and understanding the site. Both of them are decisive for the proposal and the results. It's not difficult as in difficult to do it, but to note the important aspects and make the correct interpretations and decisions.

Reflecting about specific difficulties in this competition, I can think of a few. One of them is the scale. First of all, the area is a 25 kilometer long chain of lakes, which is an enormous area and at a scale of 1:25000, many times larger than any site I've ever worked with before as a landscape architect. Even though I had a number on the length of the area, I couldn't really estimate how big it is. Then, at the same time, working at a smaller, yet still very large scale of 1:5000 simultaneously trying to add details, I still found it hard to estimate the extent. Basically, this meant I really had to know and do a thoroughgoing inventory of the entire area to understand the context, while going into more specific details in the detailing area of Lacul Straulesti. Managing being general enough on the overall landscape plan, and detailed, yet not too detailed on the spatial plan felt like a key aspect in the design and presentation.

Another difficulty, specific to this competition, was the available material. As a competitor, I was given an ID and a password to get access to material about the site on the competition homepage. The material available was a lot of

analyses and documents about the area and pictures from the site. It was a lot of material to go through and grasp, trying to find the most important facts and aspects. Some of the material was in Romanian, making it hard to understand. Even though most of the material was in English it felt like a bit of a disadvantage. Another difficulty about the material was that there were no dwg-file<sup>7</sup> available. This made it harder, especially when creating the spatial plan and the 3D drawings, since I usually use AutoCAD to create a base to build on in Illustrator or SketchUp. I still used AutoCAD, but I had to estimate the measures of the lake and its surroundings.

Last but not least, Time was a factor making it all more difficult. The competition started in the end of October 2014, but I didn't enter until the end of January 2015. This meant I had to be effective, and maybe I didn't have time to elaborate as much as I wanted. I also worked alone, when there were a limit of at most 8 person per submission. More persons working in the team doesn't necessarily lead to a better result, but it is easier to test different ideas and create a better visual presentation with more people and decided tasks. Working alone was a decision I made, even though I tried to find an Urban designer to cooperate with to try out multidisciplinary work.

## SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS

To begin with, I just want to say I am satisfied with how my proposal turned out after 5 weeks of hard work. In the end, it resulted in an idea and a proposal that, according to me, is highlighting the values of the site, solving the issues and connecting the area in an sustainable and holistic way. The only thing I'm not completely satisfied with is the Straulesti Plaza that turned out to be very large and that had to do with me not understanding the size of the area. It was not until creating the final 3D drawing that I understood how big it really was and by then, with only a day or two until

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7 File-format of data for AutoCAD to create base maps.

the deadline, it was too late to change it. Perhaps I could have worked more on the urban development as well, but I choose not to because of time and comprehension.

In the competition I did not reach the final round. In the first round of the jury selection I got 26 points out of 40, when I needed 32 to advance to the final round. Even though I got half the points I needed, 16 points, by one evaluator, the other one didn't grade me as high, which meant I didn't reach 32. Getting 16 out of 20 by one evaluator is still a good result and something I'm satisfied with. My thoughts about the evaluation is that it was quite unequal level of evaluation. The evaluators where totally opposite on the concept and method criterion and quite different on the connection to the site criterion. I also find it hard to understand Evaluator 2's comment on the concept and method criterion as:

*see criterion 2*

If there are different evaluation criteria, I would expect them to grade each criterion. Criterion 2 was creativity, which got the score 2, while the concept and method criterion got 1, with the above mentioned comment. It also felt like the evaluator hadn't really read nor gone through the whole submission, but just didn't like it because it didn't focus enough on the cut up urban landscape. Evaluator 1 mentions the lack of imagination of the urban design as well, but also evaluated the other parts of my proposal. Perhaps I wasn't clear enough with my idea and my solution of the issue of the cut up landscape, or it's just a matter of subjectivity, which always is a factor in jury selections. Since the jury members are professionals with different opinions and taste, juries can't possibly be completely unanimous.

#### Evaluation Scores

Evaluator 1:	4	2	4	3	3
Evaluator 2:	2	2	1	2	3

My conclusion of the result is that they wanted a proposal more focused on the urban design. Even though Urban growth and peri-urban sprawl was one of the four optional main focuses, it seems urban design was extra important in this competition. I also made a decision, not to focus very much on the urban design, which with hindsight might have costed me a place in the final round. My idea was to connect the urban areas by social meeting areas, green spaces, a new uniform identity and new connections and paths for circulation, but perhaps they wanted more intervention on the urban tissues as well. If that's the case, I find the importance of urban design in the shape of actual urban tissues being a bit vague in the competition program. It was an equal and fair assignment, but the many options and individual decisions on main focus and detailing areas might have attracted more students to compete, yet at the same time misguided the real aim of the task and the importance of the urban development. It at least did for me.

My primary goal was to experience the element of international architectural competitions, which I did. My secondary goal was to create a proposal that I am satisfied with and of course to get a good result in the competition and not reaching the final round is not what I hoped for. I'm a bit disappointed with the evaluation, but satisfied with my submission and I am sure the best proposal won. I am also glad that I scored high with Evaluator 1, which I also think summarized it well in his or her final comment:

*Project well structured, argued, porposal anchored in the context. Lack of imagination in terms of urban design and detail of intervention.*

How is my proposal different from the winning proposals and what conclusions come from that?

The biggest different between my proposal and the six winning proposals is the detailing level. From what I could see of the winning proposals, they seemed to have put more effort and time on detailing their proposals. I did what I could with the time I had for completing a submission and I knew my proposal was going to be more overall general and less detailed. I was also working alone, while all the winning proposals were made by teams of two to four persons.

The first prize winner called *342.914km scaffolding* also seem very innovative and creative. It builds on some kind of flexible structure that include natural and spontaneous urban processes. The structure connects the chain of lakes that creates a green-blue corridor and consolidates its relationship with Bucharest. All in all, I would say it's a structured, yet flexible and complex idea with a very high detailing level. Compared to my proposal it seem to have added other dimensions, both the urban development of the entire city and the detailing level.

Two of the proposal are focused on productive landscapes, which makes them quite hard to compare to mine.

The visual quality of maps and illustrations are good, some are hand made, some are computer generated. I think the visual quality of my proposal are just as good as most of the winning proposals' visual quality.

The conclusion is I should have worked in a team and perhaps I should have started earlier to get a higher detailing level. In the end it's the idea of the proposal and in my opinion the winning proposals have good and innovative ideas. At the same time, I wasn't that far away from a final. I got 16 out of 20 from one evaluator, which had been enough if the other evaluator graded me the same. If I would have reached the final, there would have been a chance for me to win a prize.

## MY OWN EXPERIENCES AND DEVELOPMENT

Closing this thesis as I started it, with a personal reflection of what competitions mean to me after completing an international architectural competition. It has given me a lot of experiences and I have developed as a landscape architect.

In the working process I used experiences from the final years of the landscape architecture education. I also intended to use my experiences gained in my bachelor thesis about the winners' common denominators, but I didn't really keep that in mind when I was composing my submission.

Completing this competition I have experienced the competitors perspective of the element of international architectural competitions. As mentioned in the introduction, architectural competitions are ways for architects to test and improve their abilities, while being compared with others in an equal and fair assignment (Sveriges Arkitekter 2008). I have now tested my abilities against others, and probably improved my skills in creating competition submissions.

I believe you gain experience with every time you participate in a competition. This being my first time, everything was new to me, for example the formalities, the authors declaration and the online colloquium. I had to focus on getting the formalities right, especially since I wasn't entirely sure how it would work. If I join another competition, I'm sure I will know better how it works and be able to focus more on the competition itself.



*Illustration showing a way to experience nature in the everyday life along the Emerald Necklace of Colentina.*

## Future

For the future I bring with me the harmony I felt designing this competition entry. I felt a harmony in my design process; I knew what to do and I felt confident doing it my way. I also feel I become more effective in doing the presentation, with 3D drawings, photo collages and illustrations. For this competition submission I did not have very much time to create the 3D drawings and photo collages, which in my opinion is the best way of communicate a feeling and experience of an idea, yet I still manage to create three to four fairly good ones in just a couple of days.

I am now ready to start working for real, as a graduated landscape architect.

## FURTHER QUESTIONS

- Is there any different in quality between architectural competitions and regular landscape architecture design?
- How does international architectural competitions affect the architectural development?

# Appendix A

This appendix contains the competition description of LE:NOTRE Student Competition (LE:NOTRE Institute 2014c), which includes the competition program and requirements. All of the following are the exact words of the description, but the images are not added. To view the competition description with images, go to:

[http://ilias.hfwu.de/goto.php?target=cat\\_9724&client\\_id=hfwu](http://ilias.hfwu.de/goto.php?target=cat_9724&client_id=hfwu)

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT COMPETITION (Re)Discovering the Emerald Necklace: Colentina River, Bucharest, Romania

### 1. GENERAL PRESENTATION

The International Student Competition is part of the 4th Landscape Forum of the LE:NOTRE Institute. This event will be hosted by the University of Agronomical Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, Bucharest (USAMVB) and "Ion Mincu" University of Architecture and Urbanism Bucharest (UAUIM), in Bucharest - 21-25 April, 2015. The competition is supported by the two universities as well as by the Romanian Association of Landscape Architects, Bucharest (AsoP), and the Romanian Professional Association of Urban Planners, Bucharest (APUR).

The Le:Notre Landscape Forum has worked on four focus areas so far, applied on relevant urban or periurban sites. For the 4th Landscape Forum in Bucharest the overall focus will be on the chain of lakes along the river Colentina. This semi-natural area is a huge potential for the sustainable development of Romania's capital city. Paradoxically, the river has been largely ignored and misused. This important but neglected area represents one of the most relevant sites

in Bucharest. It illustrates social and economic dynamics related to the four focus areas:

- *Urban Growth and peri-urban sprawl*
- *Sustainable tourism and recreation*
- *Heritage and identity*
- *Rural fringe*

## 2. ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

- *Ion Mincu University of Architecture and Urban Planning, Bucharest (RO):*
- *Dipl.-Arch. PhD. Urb. Angelica Stan and Dipl.-Arch. PhD. Urb. Gabriel Pascariu*
- *University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, Bucharest (RO):*
- *Assoc. Prof. PhD. Arch. Urb. Ioana Tudora*
- *HfWU Nürtingen-Geislingen (DE): Dr.-Ing. Ellen Fetzer*

## 3. AIM OF THE COMPETITION

The LE:NOTRE International Student Competition aims to support integrated and holistic approaches to the urban and peri-urban landscape through multidisciplinary student teams elaborating planning and design proposals at various scales. The role of the urban periphery within a city's overall dynamic needs to be rethought. The periphery should recover its essence and identity and become reconnected to the city's spatial, social and cultural profile. Participating students will explore the peripheral landscapes, question the complex processes in this specific landscape type, in relation to the city's context and dynamics.

The proposals should be developed around the following aspects. Participants are invited to interpret those and to set individual emphasises:

- *Sustainable visions for the relation of built tissue, open space and landscape elements*
- *Sustainable visions for the relation city-periphery and sprawl territories*
- *Proposals for improved connectivity at different scale levels*
- *Enhancement of ecological functions and ecosystem services*
- *Introduction of green infrastructure elements based on a conceptual framework*
- *Sustainable traffic proposals*
- *Proposals for the sustainable development of tourism and leisure areas*
- *Visions for a better dialog between cultural heritage and the dynamics of urban identities*

#### **Focus areas:**

Taking the aspects mentioned above into account, the competition participants are invited to develop their concepts around one of the following four themes. These topics are identical to the general structure of the landscape forum:

- *Urban growth and peri-urban sprawl: the landscape of contemporary urban peripheries*
- *Sustainable tourism and leisure: visions for landscape regeneration through tourism development*
- *Heritage and identity: permanence, patrimony, specificity and dynamics of landscape identities*
- *Rural fringe and productive landscapes: multifunctional rural landscapes and the economic dimension*

#### 4. THEME: COLENTINA RIVER CHAIN: A SUSTAINABLE PERIPHERAL LANDSCAPE

The major challenge of this competition is the scale: 25 kilometres of a complex urban periphery connected by a chain of natural and artificial lakes. It is a fascinating territory marked by strong contrasts at various levels: functional, ecological, socio-cultural, ethical, aesthetic, heritage, economic and many more. Consisting of abandoned, disparate fragments of urban voids, of interstitial spaces, of strips of porous texture, or of tough tissue, of glittering new implants co-existing with almost decaying pieces of tissue, these territories are morphologically an amazing hybrid, a mix of strident language which requires a deciphering for a proper readability.

Many of these contrasts specific to peripheral landscapes generate conflicts. This becomes evident not only in the spatial plan, but also in the social realities. The competition aims to find innovative solutions to mediate these conflicts, in order to settle the development of this landscape in the „riverbed” of sustainability.

Colentina River runs through the entire northern periphery of Bucharest. During the first half of the 20th century the river has been transformed into a chain of interconnected lakes with strong water regulation.

Four lakes for conceptual detailing are proposed: Grivita, Straulesti, Floreasca, Pantelimon. Participants are free to choose one of them for visualising their ideas in the local context. Details for each area are given in the detailed competition materials (available for registered participants).

## 5. SUBMISSION FORMAT

Participants are asked to submit two posters covering the following contents:

### **A. Landscape Concept Colentina**

This poster will cover the entire area of Colentina in relation to the city of Bucharest. The working and presentation scale is 1:25:000. Aspects to be covered: landscape elements and their enhancement, functional zones including natural areas and open space typologies, connectivity, sustainable traffic. The overall 1:25 000 plan can ideally be combined with conceptual diagrams (i.e. spatial and functional layers, bird eye view sketches, historical analysis). Keep explanatory notes short and concise. The format can be either one poster overlenght (the area covers approx. 1.5 m in this scale) or be divided into two posters (A1) in landscape format.

### **B. Spatial Concept**

The second poster will show a spatial concept for one of the three detailing areas (Griviva, Straulesti, Floreasca or Pantelimon). Working and presentation scale is 1:5 000. Aspects to be covered: spatial composition with built elements and open space typologies in scale 1: 5000. Additional information on functionality, traffic and connectivity can be provided with conceptual diagrams. Visualisations (hand drawn or computer-based) and explanatory notes on two A1 posters (landscape format).

The competition organisation is looking for reflexive and innovative approaches, giving value to the identity of the place and showing a strategy for project realisation.

## **REGISTRATION AND SUBMISSION**

The full set of background documents and plans is accessible

after online registration. Registered participants will receive a neutral login ID which will also be used for submitting the proposals in an anonymous way. This ID needs to be shown on all submitted posters. Please register under the following link: [http://ilias.hfwu.de/goto.php?target=cat\\_9724&client\\_id=hfwu&lang=en](http://ilias.hfwu.de/goto.php?target=cat_9724&client_id=hfwu&lang=en)

## 6. PARTICIPANTS

The competition is open to all students and recent graduates of landscape architecture/planning, urban/regional planning and architecture as well as related disciplines such as arts, geography, agricultural sciences, dendrology, economics, environmental psychology, forestry, hydrology and water management, IT, archaeology, ecology, social anthropology, sociology or tourism. Levels of study may be bachelor, master or PhD. Recent graduates can participate if they are still in their professional training phase (stage or similar). Employees or relatives of the jury members may not enter the competition. Both individual and group submissions will be accepted. Each student or group is allowed only one entry. Broad interdisciplinary submissions are welcome. However, the design should still focus on the configuration of the landscape, so consultation from and cooperation with landscape related disciplines is very important.

## 7. QUESTIONA AND ANSWERS

A colloquium in the form of a web conference will be held on Wednesday, 26th of November, at 18 pm CET. Registered participants will be able to submit questions for the colloquium in advance.

## 8. AWARDS

The LE:NOTRE Institute will award three prizes and select another three submissions for being honourably mentioned. The award winners will get the possibility to present their project at the LE:NOTRE landscape forum to a group of international professionals and local stakeholders.

## 9. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

### **Poster size and format**

The submitted project must comprise four (4) A1 posters (841mmx594mm, landscape format only). The landscape concept can also be shown in one long plan combining the size of two A1 posters. The submission format is PDF. The submission is only online.

### **Submission ID**

Each participant or participating team will receive a unique and anonymous ID upon registration. This ID needs to be put into the top left corner of each submitted poster. Size and format for the idea are: Arial, font 72. The posters must be numbered to be seen in that order during the selection.

### **Written information**

Entrants must also submit a brief description (250 words maximum) in a separate PDF file, identified only by the anonymous ID (DO NOT include the names of the students or the name of the university). This description must be a clear and concise text explaining the key aspects shown in the concept design proposal. The text is not to be justified, left aligned and double spaced, in Arial, font 12.

## Competition language

All submissions must be entirely in English, which is the official language of the Le:Notre Landscape Forum. Local names and specific conditions of each country may be included in the local language. This is to ensure that all material can be understood by the jury, who conduct their reviews in English.

## 10. REQUIRED GRAPHICS

- *A scheme showing the envisioned relationship of the Colentina River territory with the wider urban landscape of Bucharest*
- *A plan showing in a synthesis the analysis of the present landscape situation and the potential of intervention (1:25 000)*
- *Representation of the proposed concept and vision of intervention*
- *A plan indicating the area selected for detailing (one from the four areas proposed: lakes Grivita, Straulesti, Floreasca or Pantelimon)*
- *Spatial concept of the area selected for detailing (1:5000)*
- *Detailing according to individual decisions*
- *Cross sections, 3D drawings, sketches and details as necessary to illustrate the concept proposed.*

Both hand-drawn and computer-based visualisations are welcome.

Individual PDF files should not exceed 50 MB, minimum resolution is 200 DPI. It is the responsibility of the participants to guarantee that the final images and files are in the size and resolution adequate to their reading. The entrants must ensure that all images, photographs and other material taken from other sources are correctly accredited.

## 11. ANONYMITY AND PROTOCOL

All plans are supposed to bear the anonymous ID number given to each registered participant in the top left corner (Arial, font 72). The following naming convention applies to all submitted files: Your ID\_1.pdf, Your ID\_2.pdf etc. An additional PDF file, with the complete declaration form must be included. This must be fully completed. The declaration form will be submitted separately from the project PDF files, and will only be consulted by the jury once the final deliberations are completed.

## 12. COMPETITION RULES

Participation in the competition implies acceptance of the competition rules.

- *Proposals received after the deadline will not be admitted.*
- *Presentations that do not include the declaration form will not be admitted.*
- *Submissions shall only be accepted if sent by the means established outlined above.*
- *A selection of the works submitted will be shown in an exhibition during the 4th LE:NOTRE*

Landscape Forum Bucharest 2015 and may be also be exhibited elsewhere at the discretion of the Local Organizing Committee.

The Local Organizing Committee retains the right of duplication or publication of any or all the material submitted to the competition, and there shall be no obligation whatsoever to the entrants, beyond acknowledging the authorship of the works exhibited or published.

Submissions that have been published in any way prior to the notification of the jury final decision will not be considered. The jury shall preside over the competition and is

the sole arbiter at all levels until the final awarding of prizes. All decisions of the jury are final.

The winners of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes shall be announced by the Chair of the 4Th LE:NOTRE Landscape Forum Bucharest 2015, upon recommendation of the jury.

All inquiries must be directed to the Competition organising committee. Please read carefully through the brief and instructions, as all required information should be contained there. Jury member are not to be addressed in any way in relation to the competition.

Participants will need to submit a declaration confirming that competition data and background information will not be used for other purposes.

### 13. SUBMISSION FORMAT

The submitted folder shall include:

- 4 PDF files - 1 for each of the A1 posters
- 1 PDF file with the Project Description
- 1 PDF file with the Declaration Form

All files must be completed in English. Registered participants will receive further information concerning the electronic submission.

### 14. JURY MEMBERS

- Professor Fritz Auweck, landscape planner, Munich (DE), IFLA-Europe
- Professor Henri Bava, University of Karlsruhe (DE), asked
- Cerasella Cruciun, Romanian Professional Association of Urban Planners (RO)
- Martha Fajardo, landscape architect, Bogota (CO), IFLA Former President, LALI (Latin American landscape Initiative) Chair

- *Dr Piotr Lorens, ISOCARP Vice President YPP, Gdansk University of Technology (PL)*
- *Gheorghe Patrascu, chief architect of the city of Bucharest (RO)*
- *Ioana Streza, landscape architect, Romanian Association of Landscape Architecture (RO)*

## 15. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The projects submitted will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- *the degree of connection of the proposed vision to the explored context*
- *innovation and creativity*
- *conceptual expression and clarity*
- *methodological clarity and consistency*
- *the extent to which an holistic approach has been achieved*
- *visual communication*

## 16. SCHEDULE AND DEALINE

Dates:

- *Registration opening October 20th , 2014*
- *Feedback colloquium for registered participants November 26th, 2014, at 18 PM*
- *Latest registration date February 15th, 2015*
- *Entries received March 8th, 2015, at midnight CET*
- *Jury selection March 19th-20th, 2015*
- *Award Ceremony and Exhibition, UAUIM, Bucharest April 24th-25th, 2015*

## 17. CONTACT INFORMATION:

For more information about the 4th LE:NOTRE Landscape Forum Bucharest 2015 and participation at the student competition, please visit the website: [www.le-notre.org](http://www.le-notre.org)

Registrationlink:[http://ilias.hfwu.de/goto.php?target=cat\\_9724&client\\_id=hfwu&lang=en](http://ilias.hfwu.de/goto.php?target=cat_9724&client_id=hfwu&lang=en)

Supplementary Information (electronic access will be provided for registered participants).

Background information (in text form):

- *Various reports from different sectors*
- *History of the Colentina lakes*
- *Additional information on the 4 focuses themes*

Maps:

- *Historical Maps*
- *Topographical map 1:25 000 (situation approx. in 1975)*
- *Aerial views scale 1:25 000 and 1:5000 for each detailing area*
- *detailed plans for the four lakes proposed for detailing*

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## Unpublished

Unpublished references are material only available to registered competitors of LE:NOTRE Student Competition. All documents were available to me at: [http://ilias.hfwu.de/goto.php?target=cat\\_9724&client\\_id=hfwu](http://ilias.hfwu.de/goto.php?target=cat_9724&client_id=hfwu)

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## Images

The following image is public domain:

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THANKS FOR  
READING!