



The Saxhóll crater's stairway wins the Rosa Barba International Landscape Prize



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- **Both the Landlag ehf firm and the architect Þráinn Hauksson are the authors of the winning project**
 - **The jury also values the Railway Linear Park in Cuernavaca (Mexico) with a special commendation award**
 - **The prize is awarded within the International Landscape Biennial, organized by the Catalan Architects Association and the UPC University**
 - **The Rosa Barba International Prize is supported by Banc Sabadell Foundation**

The intervention developed around the Saxhóll volcano (Iceland) to revert the tourism effects from all the visitors hiking up to the crater everyday has been awarded the Rosa Barba International Prize. The project was built by the Landlag ehf firm and the architect Þráinn Hauksson and the prize was given away last 28th September in Petit Palau de la Música.



A needed intervention to reduce the erosion caused by visitors

The Saxhóll volcano, 45 meters high, rises from the lava covered fields of moss in the Snæfellsjökull National Park on the Snæfellsnes peninsula in western Iceland. The hill is a popular attraction for tourists seeking for lava fields views, with the Atlantic Ocean and the picturesque Snæfellsjökull glacier on the horizon. The volcano hike also awards the visitor with the opportunity to look inside the deepness of its crater. And, on top of it and to make it even more literary, this is the crater which Jules Verne imagined to be the entrance to the Centre of the Earth.

The stroll to the top of Saxhóll follows a path formed across the years by the visitors who day by day hiked up the volcano. The increase of tourists from the past recent years started to be noticed: the slopes of the mountain began to deform, and the way upwards divided itself into parallel and deformed paths. That's why, in 2014 it was indispensable to intervene and avoid a major damage around the landscape.

A stairway to heaven and hell

The team formed by Landlag ehf firm and the architect Þráinn Hauksson designed a stairway made of black steel which followed the already existing path. The stairway draws two curves that converge in the middle of the path with a bench to sit down and rest before continuing the climb to the top of the 396 steps. The path is 160 m long | 1,5 m wide, enough for two people to cross or walk by.

The project was finished by 2016, and the black steel rapidly started to oxidize and mixed its initial tone with the red coloured volcano and the alpine vegetation. The intervention resulted in good reviews from the visitors, who often call it 'The stairway to heaven'. The architects team, called it after 'The stairway to heaven and hell', based on the metaphoric denomination that craters have as a gateway to the burning flames of hell.

This project was already nominated for three other awards in 2017: The Nordic Architecture Fair Prize in Gothenfurt, the Island Design Awards and the Cultural DV Reykjavík Awards in Iceland.

More information on the project: <https://landscape.coac.net/en/node/122>

Rosa Barba International Prize

The Landscape Rosa Barba International Prize is awarded within the International Landscape Biennial, organized by the Catalan Architects Association and the UPC University. The prize's aim is to recognize the value of the best landscape projects from around the world. It is supported by the Banc Sabadell Foundation and it has a 15.000 euros economical award. 232 projects participated in this 10th edition.



This year's edition jury was formed by: Gary R. Hilderbrand, Professor of Landscape Architecture at Harvard; Walter Hood, professor and former director of Landscape Architecture at the University of California; Kathryn Moore, president of the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA) and professor of landscape at the University of Birmingham City University, UK; Teresa Moller, landscape architect, and Michael Jakob, Professor at HEPIA and HEAD in Geneva.

International Landscape School's Prize

The International Landscape School's Prize, sponsored by the Banc Sabadell Foundation, gathers the best projects presented by universities from all over the globe. This year, an international jury has decided to reward the Edinburgh College of Art (Scotland).

As a winner, the university will be able to choose one of its pupils and bring him or her to Barcelona to attend the Intensive International Workshop of the Master's in Architecture of the Landscape held by UPC.

Final projects exhibition

The International Prize exhibition puts together the 232 projects selected for the Rosa Barba International Prize and will be open until 27th October in the Catalan Architects Association. The projects are divided in four categories: Articulation, Intersection, Regeneration and Transition.

At the same time, the ETSAB University welcomes the Universities of Architecture exhibition of projects, which shows the best projects presented by 69 world universities. It will be open until 19th October.

More information: <https://landscape.coac.net/en>