

COMPETITIONS

Brooklyn Bridge Park receives Rosa Barba Award 2021

Laura von Puttkamer

Michael Van Valkenburgh's Brooklyn Bridge Park in New York has won the Rosa Barba International Landscape Prize 2021.



Brooklyn Bridge Park receives Rosa Barba Award 2021. Photo: Elizabeth Felicella





The project won in a competition against ten other projects from around the world. Brooklyn Bridge Park, which covers 85 hectares along the East River in Brooklyn in New York, won the Rosa Barba International Landscape Prize 2021 at the 11th International Landscape Architecture Biennale in Barcelona in early October. Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates (MVVA), a New York-based landscape architecture firm, worked on the project for over twenty years. According to the prize jury, the park “transformed an industrial site of abandoned warehouses, obsolete piers, and decaying bulkheads into a vibrant public space.” A year before the corona-pandemic, Brooklyn Bridge Park attracted about five million visitors annually.



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The area along the East River in Brooklyn before the redevelopment, in 2006. Photo: Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates

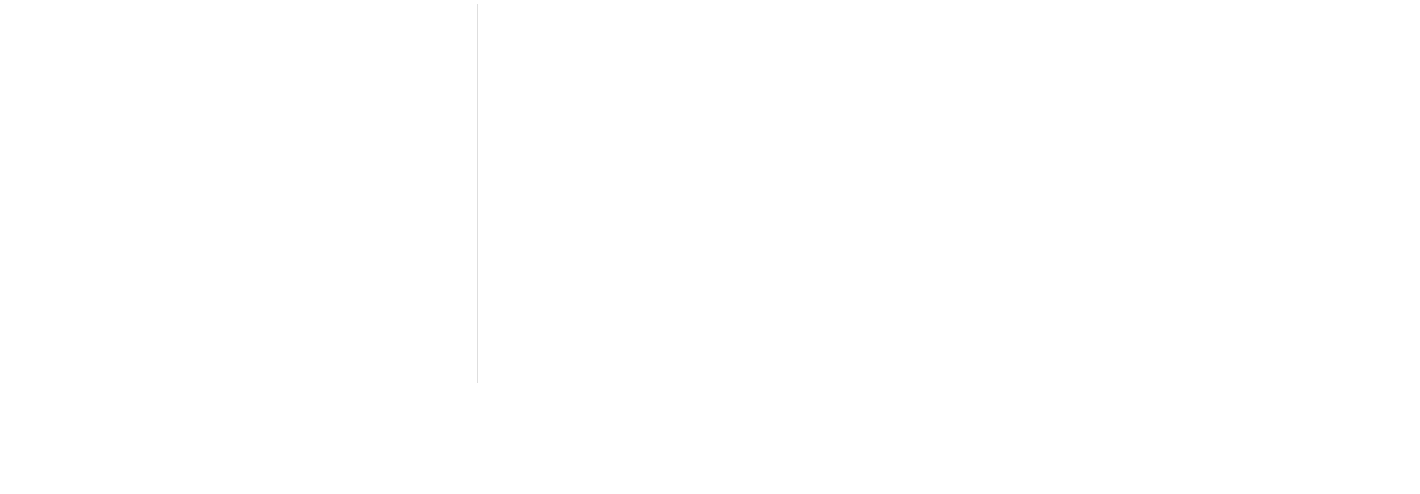


The history of Brooklyn Bridge Park



park ultimately came from Brooklyn residents themselves. Brooklyn is the city district in New York that had the least amount of green space and parkland.

At the time, the residents had no access to the abandoned industrial site on the waterfront and thus had no access to the water. The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ), the site's owner at the time, originally planned to convert the abandoned shipping terminal into a profit orientated project with commercial, retail, and residential uses. Only after decades of persuasion did dedicated groups succeed in convincing policy-makers that public access to the waterfront was necessary, especially in a neighborhood that lacked green space.



Brooklyn Bridge Park provides public access to the water. Photo: Etienne Frossard

The Design of Brooklyn Bridge Park

MVVA's planning and design team kept the existing structure of the site. As a result, the park consists of a narrow waterfront strip on one side and is divided into a total of eleven sections on the other. Six piers protrude into the East River. The redesigned shoreline strips are made of natural materials, such as salt marsh. This helps the park withstand strong waves. The design of Brooklyn Bridge Park ultimately creates a system of new and old connections between the city and the river. This creates a vibrant urbanity that provides space for a variety of activities. So, as each section of the park has opened over the past decade, the park has evolved along with the New Yorkers themselves. In this way, the park itself has become an integrated part of their everyday lives.





Brooklyn Bridge Park – a real people’s park

This story has now convinced the international jury of the 11th Landscape Architecture Biennial at the beginning of October 2021. “One of the many strengths that sets this project apart from other competition projects is its ability to bring people together and foster a sense of inclusive community there in the midst of a designed natural environment. Accordingly, with rich and well-programmed activities, the abandoned warehouses, outdated piers and decaying bulkheads are transformed into a vibrant public space visited by more than five million people annually and considered a true people’s park.” The international, top-level jury included Esteban Leon (Head of City Resilience Global Programme of UN-Habitat), as well as renowned landscape architects and teachers Cristina Castelbranco, Kongjian Yu, James Hayter and Julie Bargmann.



The redesigned park offers a variety of activities, bringing the public space to life. Photo: Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates

The proximity to the water brings many visitors and residents together in Brooklyn Bridge Park. Photo: Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates

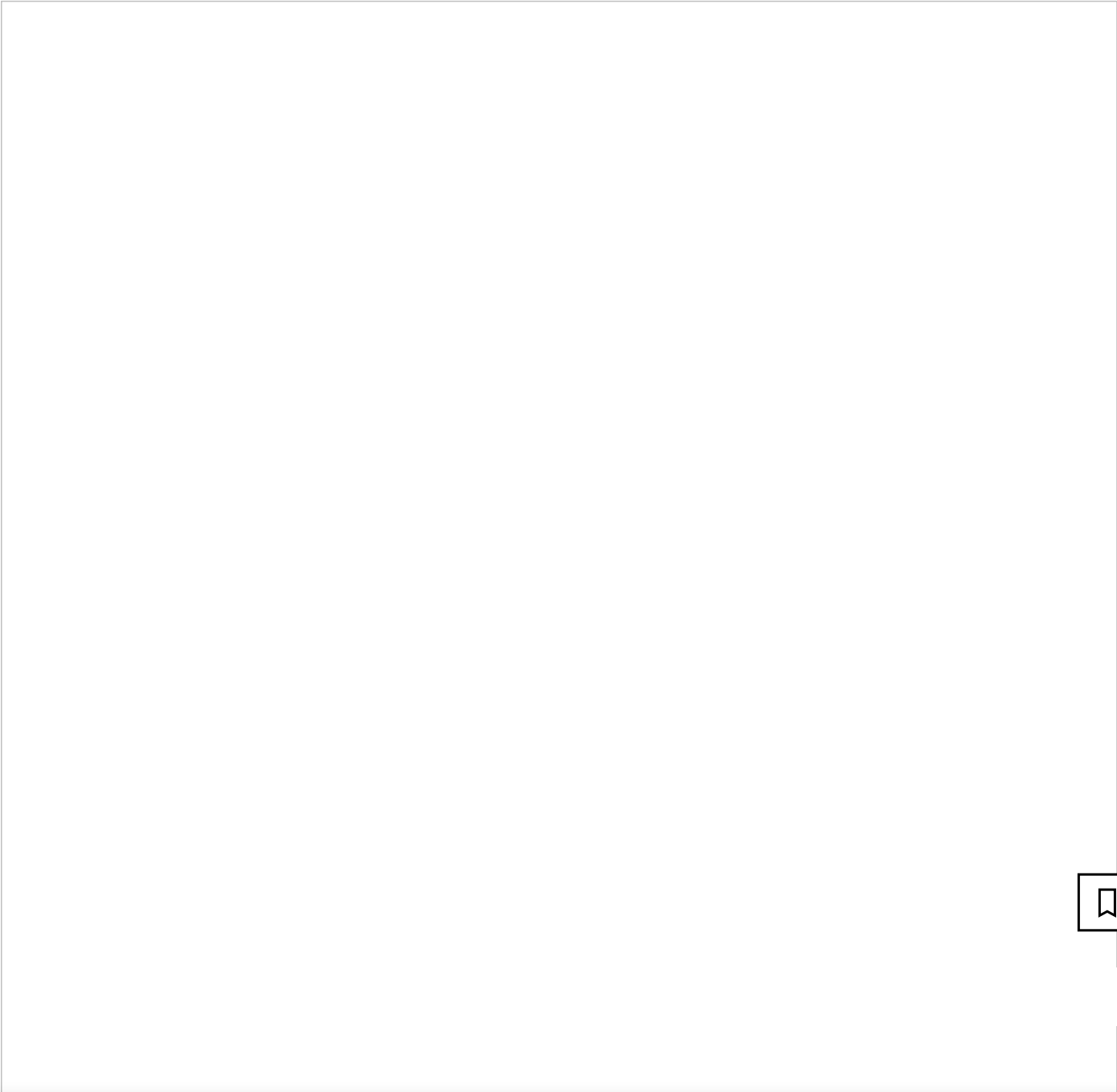
The Rosa Barba International Landscape Prize

The Rosa Barba International Landscape Prize is endowed with \$15 000. Any landscape architecture project from the last five years can win the prize. Afterwards, the selected projects will also be published in a book catalog of the Biennale. In addition, the projects will be part of an exhibition and thus included in the Biennale’s online archive. Col·legi d’Arquitectes de Catalunya (COAC) and Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC) organized the 11th International Landscape Architecture Biennial in Barcelona. The Barcelona Metropolitan Region, the City Council and the Provincial Council of the City of Barcelona (Diputació de Barcelona), the Fundació Banco Sabadell, the ISUF Congress, IFLA, IFLA Europe and the New European Bauhaus supported the organization.



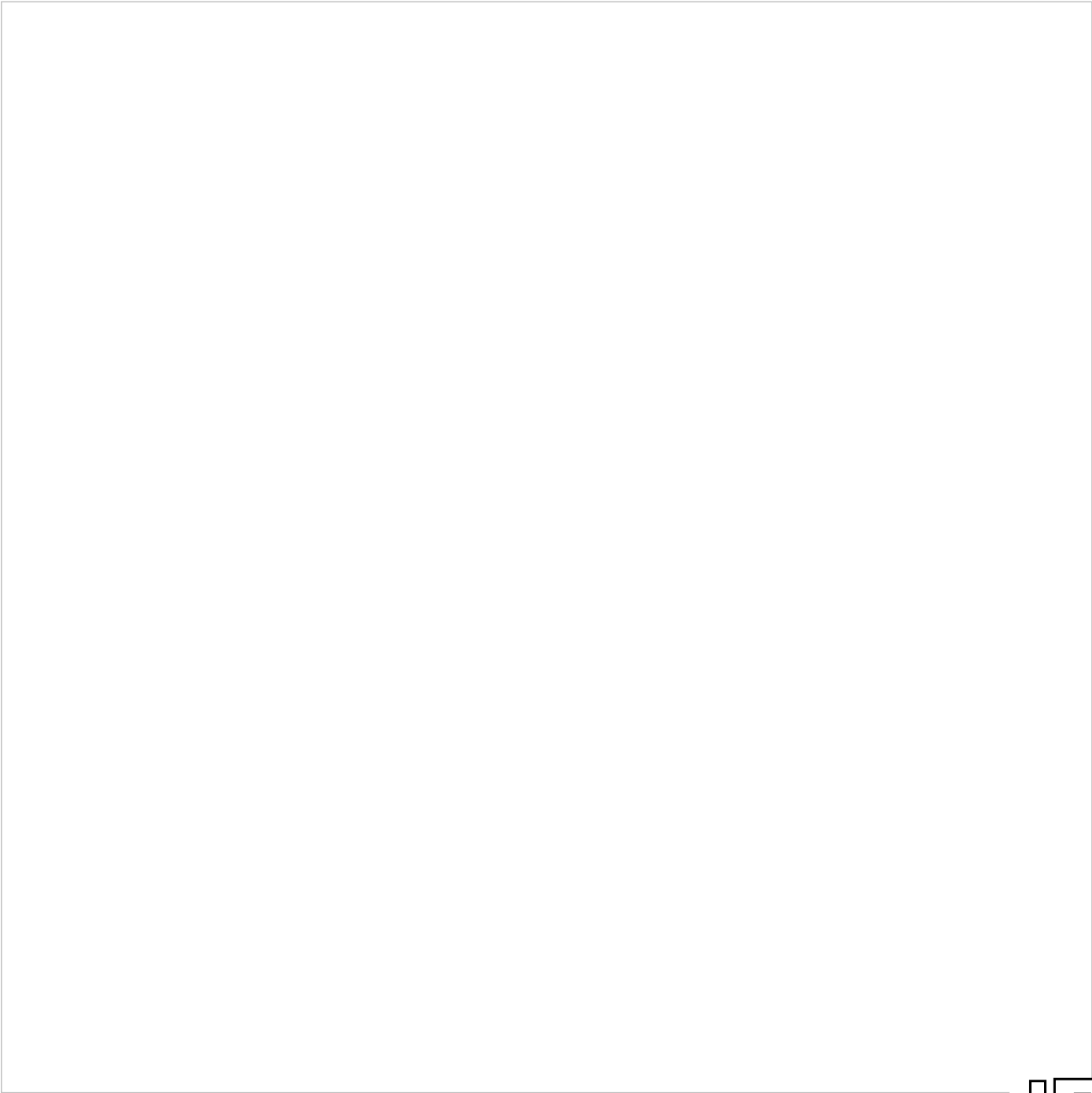


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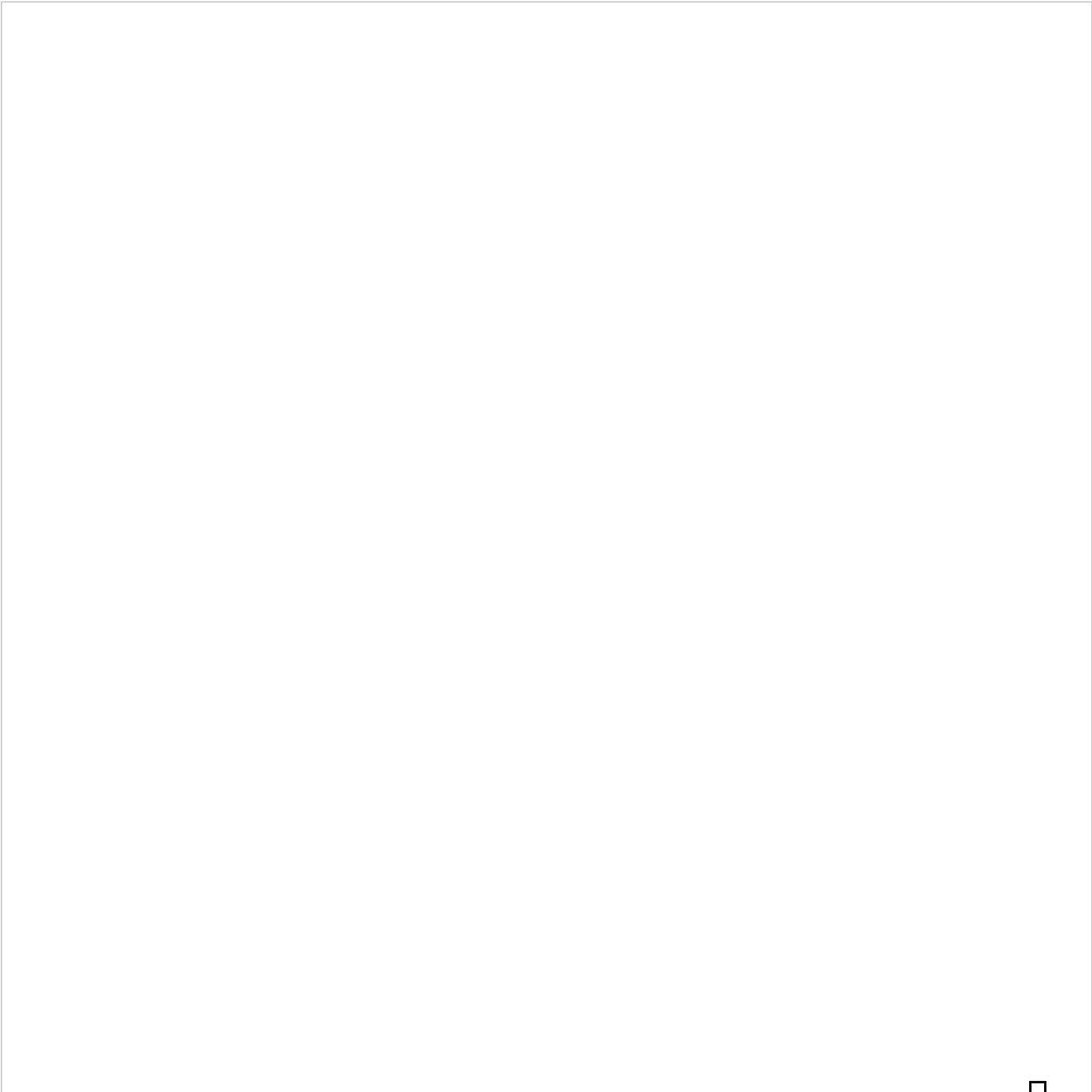


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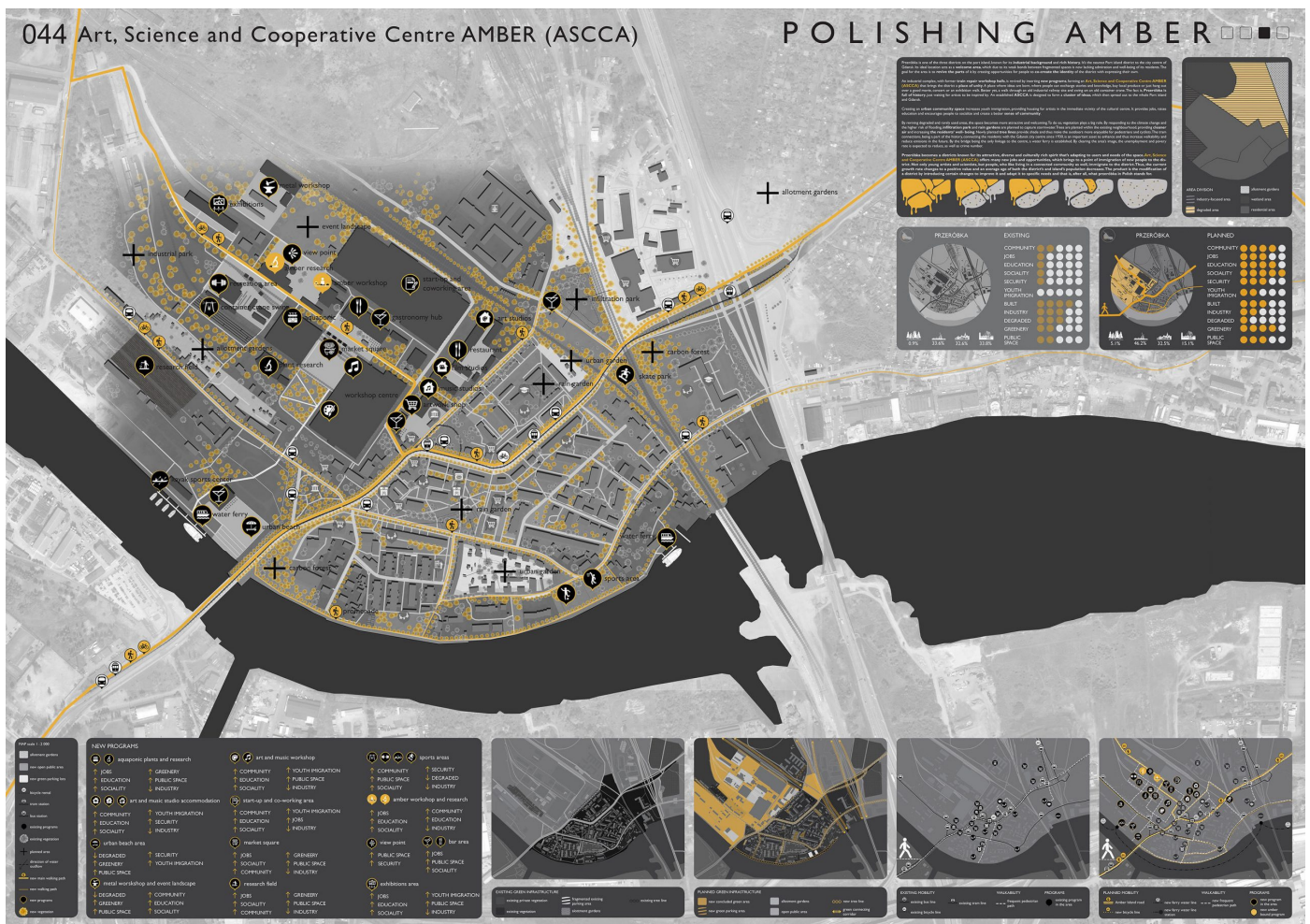


COMPETITIONS

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