

For immediate release

Lighting Up the Gesù Contest

Three Montreal designers win first prize

Montreal, March 18, 2009 – The announcement was made, the ideas bubbled and the jury finally decided. Mathieu Koch, David-Alexandre Côté and Steve Blanchette, three Montreal designers, have won the first prize in the ideas competition for the illumination of the Gesù facade for their sensitive proposal, entitled "Rencontre sur les marches de l'église".

As part of the contest organized by the Quartier des spectacles Partnership, the Gesù and the City of Montreal's Design Montréal agency, the jury chose from among 37 entries submitted by a wide array of creators (architects, designers, students, etc.) from three continents. The entry from BCK design, a firm founded by UQAM environmental design graduates Mathieu Koch, David-Alexandre Côté and Steve Blanchette, drew the attention of the jury with its evocation of the soft and fragile glow of candlelight. They were awarded the \$10,000 first prize in the contest.

The \$5,000 second prize went to Martin Labrecque and Jean Laurin, both Montreal-based lighting designers, for their submission "Deux mondes, un lieu". James Long and Athena N. Anders, architects from New York, won the \$3,000 third prize for "Light Shadow Dream". The members of the jury recognized the distinctive theatricality with which both of these submissions revealed the spirit of place present at the Gesù.

As a site of activity in both the artistic and the spiritual domains, the Gesù brings together a diverse public. So that this public could become a valued participant in the project, the *Lighting Up the Gesù* exhibition was open to visitors from January 20. An impressive number of people took the opportunity to vote for their favorite submission, with 1,000 of the 13,000 total visitors choosing to fill out a ballot and make their voice heard.

The results of the public vote were generally in accord with the choices of the jury. From the six submissions that received the most votes, the \$2,000 public's choice award went to Jonathan Barro and Stéphane Caissy of Montreal, the creators of "Gesù architectural."

"The City of Montreal and the *Montreal, cultural metropolis – November 2007 Rendez-vous* partners agreed to promote design and architectural excellence, and to make extensive use of competitions. Internationally, these processes have promoted the emulation of ideas and allowed stakeholders to compare various concepts and make a clear choice. The three partners in the ideas competition for the illumination of the Gesù façade made exemplary use of the competition approach, and succeeded in attracting interest from designers all over the world and the wider public" said André Lavallée, who is responsible for urban planning and development and public transport for the City of Montreal Executive Committee.

"This competition will allow the Gesù to reclaim its own history and identity, in all its artistic and spiritual complexity. The call went out, and creatives and citizens answered it! We felt how much

the Gesù is a part of the living, collective memory of Quebec's people. The challenge is to keep this important place of creation and reflection from becoming just an architectural relic" declared Gabriel Côté, Gesù executive director.

After the competition

"Rest assured that it is very important to us that Gesù is integrated into the luminous pathway of the Quartier des spectacles. This year, it will be lit with the luminous signature – the double line of red dots – which will be installed between now and the end of 2009, thanks to the recent financing from the City of Montreal and the Ministère des Affaires municipales, des Régions et de l'Occupation du territoire" affirmed Mr. Charles Lapointe, president of the Quartier des spectacles Partnership.

With the quality of the projects submitted to the contests, the recommendations of the professional jury and the votes of the public, the stakeholders now have the key elements they need to decide what kind of lighting scheme will best reveal the identity of the Gesù as the heart of the Quartier des spectacles. The process of reflection and dialogue will continue until the necessary architectural, artistic and financial components are in place.

The *Lighting Up the Gesù* exhibit will continue at the Gesù until March 28.

- 30 -

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