ARIADNE

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Nine public landmarks were built on a university campus in South Korea. As a giant Ariadne’s thread, these bent metal structures help to better orientate the users around the campus. At the same time, the project aims to link the existing network of faculties, emphasising their interdisciplinary nature and thus creating a unique system. The landmarks evoke a thread that, with simple structures, emerge from the ground and stitch together the most important places on the university campus. Only the central landmark is more complex and iconic, since it represents the beginning and the end point of the thread, and it is placed in the central university quad.

The design was carried out in collaboration with Korea Tech and a group of students in order to develop the idea and to further implement the detailed design. The process was thus an experiment of practical and educational design, with concepts that bridge art, architecture, and urbanism. The structures have enhanced the quality of the public space and helped to create a sense of appropriation from the users.
Fig. 2: Concept model of the University Campus. The interconnected lines aim to emphasize the new network of public landmarks.

Fig. 3: The structure of the Engineering Bldg 1. Art, architecture and nature work together.
1. How can public artworks increase physical and psychological wellness through hand-built objects?

2. How can the enhanced public space contribute to improve a sense of identity while building community and reciprocity?

3. How can a physically attractive, user-friendly and contemplative built environment benefit those who work, study, visit, and profit from higher education.

4. How can a real project conducted though in depth research through design be integrated into the curriculum framework?

KOREA TECH commissioned the study of a series of artworks for its campus by its School of Architectural Engineering and appointed the author for its design and construction.

The design analysis focused on two main points: the campus life, which includes its open spaces, and the interaction between departments. This synergy is comprised of a network of relationships, composed of different departments and faculty members who are connected by multidisciplinary purpose, creating a unique system.

The project’s ambition was to enhance the quality of the public realm through a landscape intervention that will represent the university’s multidisciplinary character via a series of landmarks. This, in turn, have strengthened and extol the unseen system that links the faculties and its users to the entire campus.
Fig. 5: The structure of the Engineering Bldg 1.
Fig. 6: The structure of the Global Education Centre (GEC).

Fig. 7: The structure of the Engineering Bldg 3.
Fig. 8: Construction phases.

Fig. 9: Construction phases.
INSIGHTS

Public art on university campuses is a subject that is lacking proper study, but the institutions that decide to invest in public art in order to enhance a sense of community on their campuses are increasing in number. Thus, a more scientific approach on the impact of public art on campuses is a possible future field of application for the art and design discipline.

In the case of Korea Tech Public Art installation, the importance of designing these public artworks for the University campus is that it contributed to the shaping of the surrounding community. The public landmarks have eventually increased the quality of public life on campus, and the interaction among the users. Their impact is also noticeable thanks to the numerous activities that take place since their realisation: public concerts, job fairs, and informal gatherings. The president of Korea Tech said that this project has significantly impacted the public perception quality of the university campus and enhanced the creative environment for all users of the campus.

DISSEMINATION

The project was presented as an exhibition in 2013 before its realisation (2015) in Seoul, South Korea.

After its construction, the project has been presented in several universities in Korea and abroad.

Furthermore, a research on public art on university campuses has been presented at the Gwangju in 2015 during the Design Biennale.

Further research is ongoing as this project is now part of collaborative research to be implemented as an Impact Case Study.