Posts

"THE QUEST FOR NEW HORIZONS"



[...]The creation of Wallonia-Brussels Architectures (WBA) can be seen as a public response that officialises, on the one hand, the qualities of architectural practices in the French-speaking Community and, on the other hand, the overlapping desires of our architects, between the quest to obtain recognition for their creative specificity and the need to win new contracts or partnerships. This new structure sets out to put its finger on the point at which the two logics, economic and cultural, converge and reinforce the interactions between the initiatives already carried out for export purposes. The agency's name is worthy of comment.Wallonia-Brussels. The agency's field of action covers a territory, that of the Brussels and Walloon regions, entrusted with economic competencies (foreign trade, town planning, housing, etc.) but also covers a linguistic community, French-speaking Belgium, in other words the French-speaking Community Wallonia-Brussels, which manages cultural competencies (as well as teaching, research, etc.). Architectures. A use of the plural that says a lot about the difficult question of ?who do we support?? or again ?what do we export??. At the WBA, the emphasis is put on support for practices that highlight the know-how of our architects. The use of diverse approaches and transversality are favoured by events that associate various architectural practices and related disciplines, such as planning, landscaping, graphics, the arts, design, photography, publishing, etc. This name, WBA, is ed with that of the technical structures of Wallonia-Brussels, created jointly by Wallonia-Brussels International and the Ministry of the French-speaking Community. Four strong, these specialised teams have the task of making a name for Wallonia-Brussels on the international stage in the fields of music (WBM), image (WBImages), theatre and dance (WBT/D) and design and fashion (WBDM) . They have shown their worth by helping to raise awareness of the cultural potential of Wallonia-Brussels abroad, by making it visible and by positioning its creators in interesting professional networks. With architecture, the fifth agency is riding the wave of the success of its predecessors. This title therefore reveals notions that give the WBA missions that are both economic and cultural, the two inextricably linked pillars of the development of architecture, and, more globally, the development of our societies ? of knowledge and innovation.[...] While careful not to duplicate any existing initiative, WBA sets out to create new opportunities or to support projects underway by the four main bodies through which it cooperates more or less closely according to the projects (Architect Unit of the Ministry of the French-speaking Community Wallonia-Brussels, WBI, AWEX and Brussels Export). Partnerships are also planned, according to terms and conditions that are yet to be defined, with the International Centre for the City, Architecture and Landscape (CIVA), A+ revue belge d'Architecture, Bozar Architecture, etc.The task of WBA differs somewhat from that of the aforementioned ?sister? agencies. As none comes up with a perfectly identical answer to the question: ?what do we export?. WBA must take account of the specific characteristics of its sector ? here we promote competencies and not ?duplicable? finished products or stage performances ? in order to define the key drivers of its action and the evaluation criteria of the

requests for support. Consequently, WBA's strategic action plan is scalable: it is based on constantly renewed consultations and evaluations with the aim of living up to the expectations of a sector with strong demands. In concrete terms, WBA sets out to be a facilitator for architects anxious to participate in competitions, fairs, festivals and colloquia abroad by offering export coaching, with particular emphasis on young architects. The agency creates partnership opportunities between architecture firms, industrialists, universities, Belgian and foreign, to stimulate export of know-how, foreign investments and technical innovation. WBA also promotes the image of Wallonia and Brussels by supporting the international dissemination and promotion of the cultural practices of the architectural sector via publications, the creation of exhibitions, the organisation of seminars, press visits in Wallonia and in Brussels, etc.Four lines of approach thus mark the first year of the agency's existence: the organisation of collective actions abroad, the creation of promotional events in Belgium, the granting of financial supports for export and, finally, the drawing up of promotional supports. [...][...] The ideal that underpins this new dynamic is that of a flexible and federating platform, whose guiding line is??synergy?. [...] Far from being incantatory ephemeral effects, we must help our architects on a quest for new horizons to gain a foothold on the international stage: it is up to the public authorities to support them, to structure them and to present them «under the spotlight . Aurore Boraczek heads up Wallonie-Bruxelles Architectures, an agency that ensures the international promotion of the architectural practices and architecture of the French-speaking Community Wallonia-Brussels.

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