



# Stripped Bare

THE NAKED ARCHITECTS & STU(ur)BOO(rd)T

Recently nominated for a top prize at the Index 2005 competition in Denmark, Belgian office The Naked Architects also dreams of creating a hot spot in Antwerp's city centre, using a barge and 30 containers.

Text by Max Borka.

Main picture: the architects hope to realise the **STU(ur)BOO(rd)T** in 2007 in the old Antwerp docks.

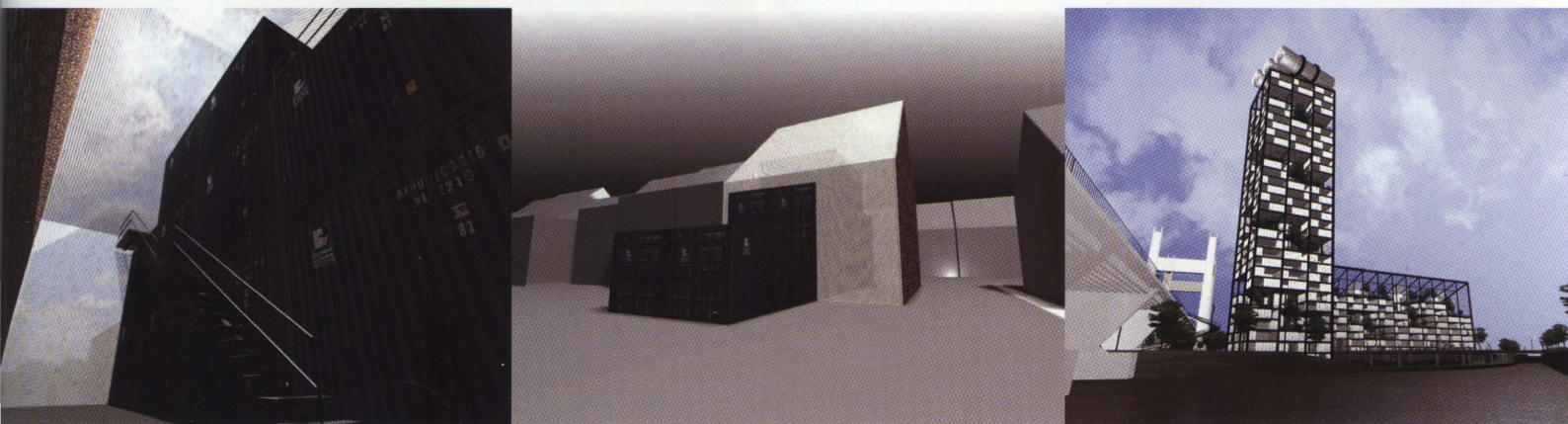
Facing page; from left to right: another container project has been specifically designed to suit the local vernacular.

Far right: **Simply-City**, top nominated for Index 2005.

The Naked Architects is a small, young practice based in Antwerp, and run by Frederik De Smet and Pieter Peerlings, both in their early twenties. It describes itself as flexible, multidisciplinary and innovative – 'Each project has to be a step ahead' - while the name is also partly the method: reduce the construction and its costs to the maximum, when necessary by using found objects. That's also how the project with the impossible name - STU(ur)BOO(rd)T - was born, an idea that goes back to their student days: 30 very colourful 20ft-high containers, stacked in three layers on a barge, that will serve as a student accommodation. Circulation will be made possible by building a steel skeleton around the stack of containers. On the waterside of the building the container doors will be open at a 90 degree angle, thus supporting the steel grills that serve as sunshades and terraces for the student rooms above, while the open mouth of the containers will be closed off with a sash-window, that will reach from top to bottom. On the opposite side steel footbridges will allow entrance to the containers and their 15 sq m of floor space.

True to the Naked philosophy the interiors of the standard containers will be left as such. Only a small Inox sanitary element will be added, with the metal walls kept starkly bare. Thermal and acoustic insulation will be provided by fortifying the walls on the exterior, invisible to the naked eye, while extra sanitary space will be created in the barge, together with a communal kitchen and a multi-functional living space – able to cope with the inevitable parties. But in the finishing of the barge things will also be kept to a minimum according to the architects, the intention to evoke a feeling that will be as pure and strong as possible.

In summer the project could be transformed into a bed & breakfast, with the vessel as restaurant and lounge. Antwerp being a student city, and one of the world's leading ports – the architects hope to get the project realised in 2007, as a hot spot on Het Eilandje, a neighbourhood with disused docks that the local authorities have desperately been trying to gentrify in recent years. The project could also be incredibly cheap, say the architects, since different container companies, by way of sponsoring, could provide the containers. 'What's more: being able to say that one lives in container Evergreen, would be a nice reference to the time when the local villa's bore names like Sunshine or Rose Garden, while the difference in colour would give the students the opportunity to choose a container that is adapted to their personal taste.'



STU(ur)BOO(rd)T is not the first container project by The Naked Architects. A similar scheme had been entered for the U2 Tower competition in Dublin in 2002, while in 2003 it designed a cheap two-family house that had a stack of second-hand containers as its basic structure. Around this stack a second skin was to be constructed with a prefab steel structure and translucent plastic plates, referring in its form to the local vernacular, and the habit – read obligation - to crown a house with a roof in the form of a saddle. The void in between the stack of containers and the second skin had the possibility to be used as a multifunctional space. The house will be realised, but without the containers, say the architects, who recently were the only Belgians nominated for the top Index 2005 competition in Copenhagen with Simply-City, a tower that is nothing more than a skeleton of columns and floor plates. The spaces thus created can be filled up at will. #

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