

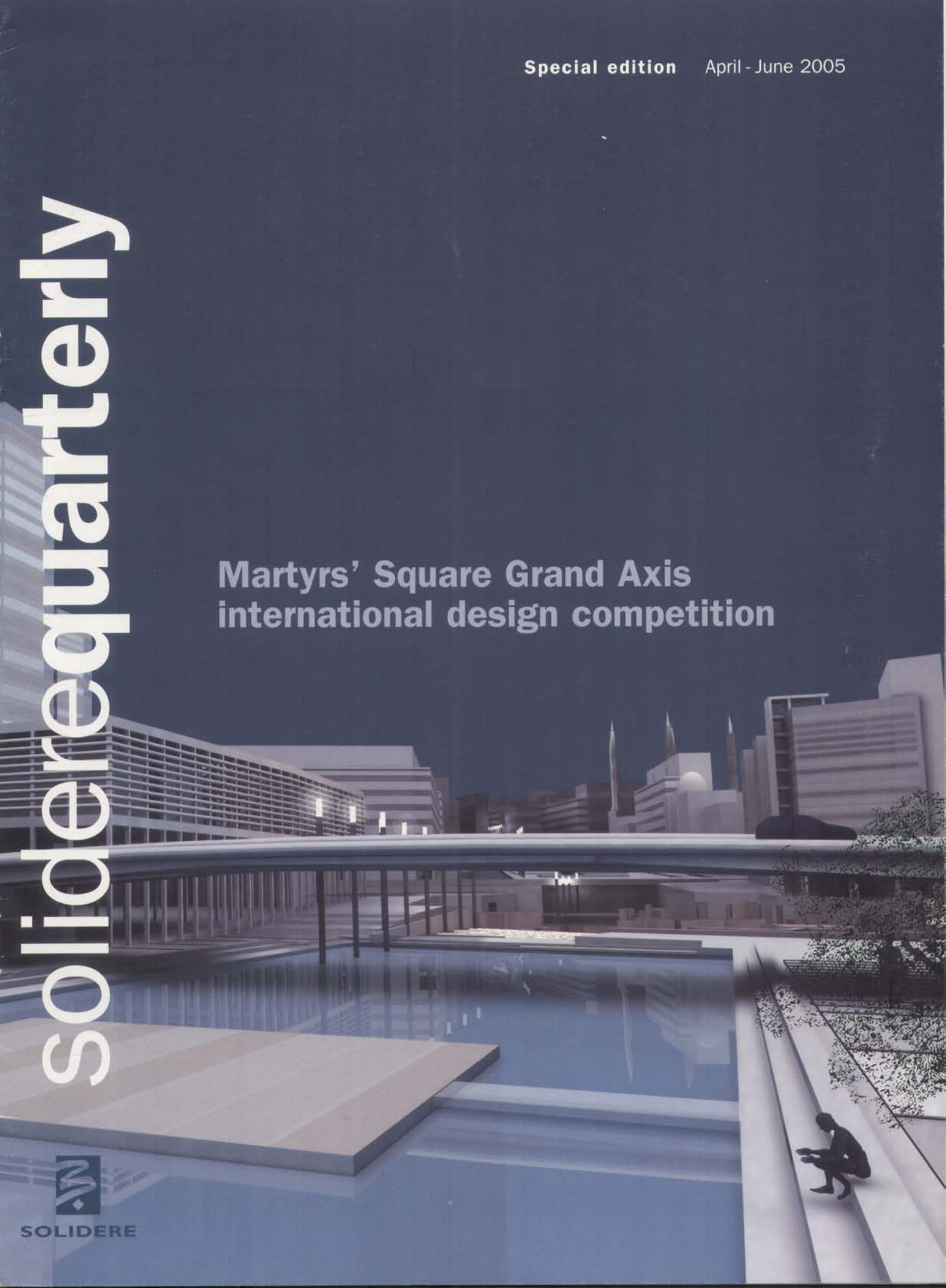
Special edition April - June 2005

**soliderequarterly**

**Martyrs' Square Grand Axis  
international design competition**



**SOLIDERE**



## MARTYRS' SQUARE *competition*



Solidere chairman Nasser Chammaa with the winning professional team.

### International jury

Fouad Awada, architect/urban planner, Lebanon  
Rouaida Ayache, architect, France  
Donald Bates, architect, US  
Rodolfo Machado, architect/urban designer, Argentina  
Joan Busquets, architect/urban planner, Spain  
Samir Khalaf, sociologist, Lebanon  
Chong Chia Goh, architect, Singapore

### Deputy jury members

Bernard Khoury, architect, Lebanon  
Maurizio Marzi, architect, Italy

### Solidere technical committee

Angus Gavin, Urban Development Division manager, professional adviser  
Fadi Jamali, Town Planning manager  
Farid Nehme, Development Control manager  
Moustapha Madi, urban designer  
Amira Solh, project coordinator

Solidere launched in June 2004 the international Martyrs' Square grand axis design competition, in conformity with the Union of International Architects (UIA) regulations. The competition site consists of the square, its open space axis, now extended to the harbor quayside, and its associated development corridor, with views towards the port and the Mediterranean beyond.

Design proposals were sought to reconnect and reposition the city in its national and regional emerging role in a forward looking postwar era, taking into account the most recent events in Lebanon that had a major impact on the competition site. The two-stage competition was open to all students and professionals. There were 277 registrants from 45 countries and 122 designs were submitted. The results were announced by the international jury on May 18 at a press conference held in the City Center Dome, where the designs were exhibited from May 19 - June 11. A public forum about the future design of Martyrs' Square was held on June 2.

### Professional team awards

- First prize: Antonis Noukakis and Partners, ia+s architecture and design, Greece
- Second prize: Nabil Gholam Architecture and Planning, Lebanon, Vincent van Duysen Architects, Belgium, Djurovic & Associates Landscape Architects, Yugoslavia
- Third prize: Hashim Sarkis, Architecture, Landscape, Urban Design, US

### Student designs

#### Prizes

- First place: Layth Madi, Ivan Perez-Rossello, Harvard University
- Second place: Joan Caba Roset, Oriol G Ruiz, Eloi Masferrer Sala, Escola Tecnica Superior d'Arquitectura, Barcelona
- Third place: Aaron Cohen, Carolina Mejia, Harvard University

#### Honorary mention

- Wilmar Lorenz, Ecole Spéciale d'Architecture, Paris
- Claudia Mejia, Harvard University

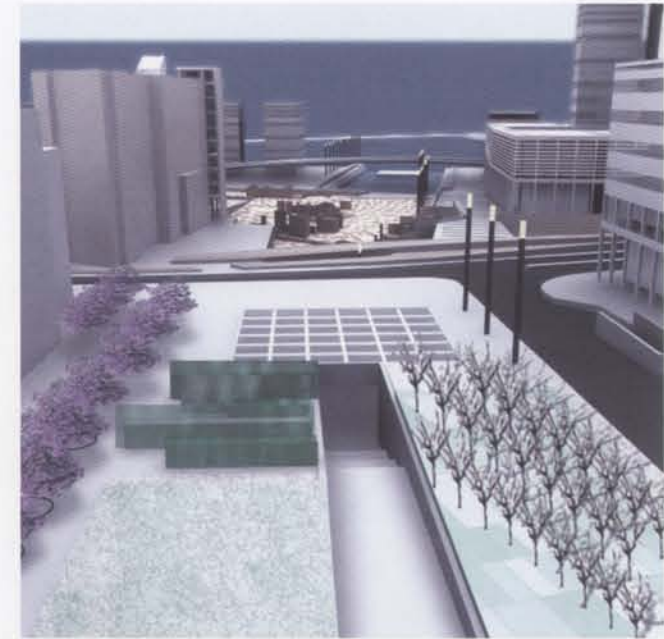
## FIRST PRIZE *professionals*

The winning design provides a robust and convincing proposition for a redefined Martyrs' Square. The scheme defines four clearly differentiated sections of the grand axis, each being responsive and attuned to the subtle characteristics of the corresponding context. Importantly, the project offers a clear symbolic organization of the spaces along the axis, as well as an intelligent and varied array of commercial, retail, residential and civic structures that define a consolidated urban field around the square and axis.

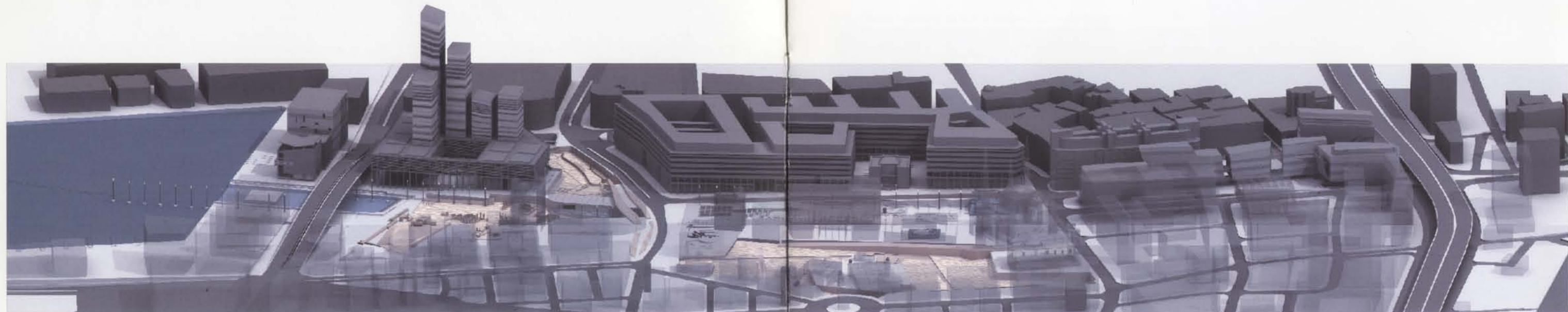
The project makes a strong linkage to the waterfront, offering a unique incorporation of the harbour back into the site, with the creation of the 'Sea Square'. The scheme as a whole proposes a continuously accessible pedestrian route, uninterrupted by vehicular traffic, from Rue Emir Bechir down to the waterfront. It also shifts traffic to one side only at Martyrs' Square, physically meshing the square to the urban fabric along the western edge. This significantly enhances the social and public functions of the space in light of recent events and it allows for a range of participations and engagements within this important civic domain. The landscaping proposal gives physical definition to the immediate zone around the Martyrs' statue, but it also allows the space to expand and be reconfigured for larger scale events. It successfully incorporates the new burial grounds for Rafic Hariri and associates.

This project was the most successful of all the finalists in giving a comprehensive design to the whole dimension of the competition. It creates an imaginative and feasible project that will offer a profound new urban order to this important sector, one which can accommodate and support the aspirations and demands of a proud community.

*(Jury's commendation on the winning design)*



Above and below: winning design, perspectives and axonometric view.



## SECOND PRIZE *professionals*



Above and below: second prize design, perspective and exhibition panel.

This scheme is beautifully presented and offers a strong proposal for Martyrs' Square and the grand axis, instituting a linear extension that projects a continuous line from Rue Emir Bechir to the waterfront. The proposal is primarily concerned with a development of the landscaping and offers a subtle and considered use of materials. In addition, the proposal provides for the insightful formation of linkages across the east to west directions, one in alignment with the Hariri burial grounds and another with the archaeological site. However, the jury felt the landscaping was overly picturesque and was considered too refined or precious to be responsive to the recent changes that have occurred around Martyrs' Square.

By comparison with the winning design, this scheme, like many others in the competition, created a single powerful axis and bridging structure to the waterfront. The strength of this idea has an instant appeal. In the final analysis, however, the jury felt that a linked sequence of spaces inflecting and responding to the varying contexts along the grand axis, proved a more successful approach.

*(Jury's commendation on the second prize design)*



## THIRD PRIZE *professionals*

This proposal offered a very intelligent and thorough investigation of the theme of the *Maidan*. In doing so, the scheme sought to underline the inclusive, social notion of the site, offering multiple scenarios of uses and participation in the square and grand axis.

The project also gives well-developed proposals for the buildings surrounding the square, producing a sympathetic urban fabric proposed for new developments. This new urban fabric is well articulated. However, the massing and image of buildings to the southern end are too massive and are spatially constricting. As building types, they are considered less than optimum. Most important of all, the project gives far too little development of the square itself. The importance of the social, political and civic uses of the square are too underdeveloped to be considered successful.

*(Jury's commendation on the third prize design)*



Third prize design, 3-D image.

Hashim Sarkis explaining his team's design at the public forum.





Left to right: Solidere chairman Nasser Chammaa with Messrs. Rami Hourie and Rafik Khoury.



Nabil Gholam explaining his team's design to architect Georges Arbid.



Neil Porter of Gustafson-Porter landscape architects viewing the winning design.



Public forum panel.

**Public forum panel**

- Angus Gavin, Solidere, professional adviser
- Roueida Ayache, jury representative
- Anastasia Noukaki, winning design
- Vincent van Duysen and Vladimir Djurovic, second prize design
- Hashim Sarkis, third prize design



Visitors viewing the shortlisted designs.



The Greek team viewing shortlisted designs.



Architects and members of the community viewing the third winner's panel, with Amira Solh, project coordinator, in the foreground.



Members of the first prize team looking at students winning designs.



The Greek team studying the panels for the second prize design.